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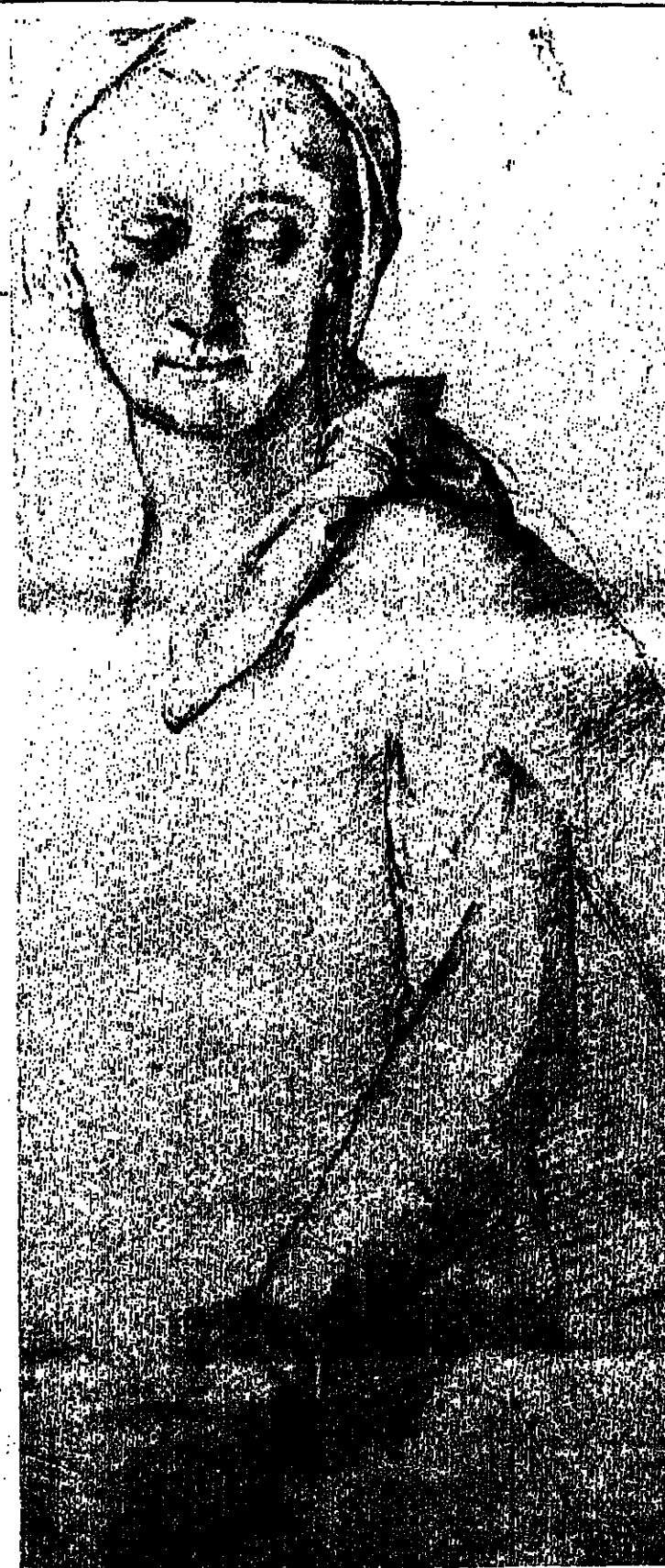
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A blast against the bishops

By Christopher Hill

LELAND H. CARLSON:
Martin Marprelate, Gentleman
Master Job Throckmorton Laid Open in his Colors
445pp. San Marino, California: Huntington Library.
0 87438 112 8

The Marprelate Tracts were the biggest scandal of Elizabeth I's reign. For thirty years there had been rumblings from a Puritan group in the House of Commons who pressed for further reform of the Church of England. The compromise settlement of 1559 seemed very inadequate to those who wanted to get back to the Protestantism of the reign of Edward VI, and perhaps to continue along the path of reformation. A learned theological warfare between the Presbyterian Thomas Cartwright, Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and John Whitgift, had ended with the promotion of the latter to be Archbishop of Canterbury in 1583. Whitgift started a fierce campaign to root Puritanism out of the church.

Suddenly in 1589 a series of anonymous and illegally printed pamphlets appeared, signed by Martin Marprelate. (Martin=Luther; Marprelate because bishops obstruct reform.) They were not ordinary Puritan tracts. They were written in a witty, rumbustious, savage and extremely effective colloquial style. They not only denounced the bishops for the antichristian nature of their office; they dwelt in personal and often painfully accurate detail on their sexual misfortunes. (Marriage of the clergy was a relatively new possibility.) They gave examples of the bishops' greed and rapacity. In that hierarchical and deferential society, their approach was, to say the least, unusual. Marprelate addressed the Archbishop as "nunkle Canterbury", "that miserable and desperate caniff John Whitgift, the Pope of Lambeth", "a plain Antichrist". "Neither will I say that his grace is an infidel (nor yet swear that he is much better)".

Indeed, I never said in my life that there was ever any great familiarity (though I know there was some acquaintance) between Mistress Toye and John Whitgift. And I'll defy 'em, I'll defy 'em, that will say so of me. And wherefore is Richard of Peterborough unmarried, but to provide for other men's children? O, now I remember me; he has also a charge to provide for, his hostess and cousin of Sibsan. The petticoat which he bestowed upon her within this six months was not the best in England, the token was not unmeet for her sister.

John Aylmer, Bishop of London, was "a dumb dunce, John of good London". Thomas Cooper, Bishop of Winchester, has a face "made of seasoned wainscot and will lie as fast as a dog can trot". Of a learned treatise by Dr John Bridges: Dean of Salisbury, the author writes "I have laughed as though I had been tickled, to see with what slight he can throw in a popish reason, and who saw him? And with what art he can convey himself from the question, and go to another matter; it is wonderful to think. But what would not a dean do to get a bishopric?"

That was not the way in which people were used to hearing the lord bishops addressed. John Whitgift claimed to be the second person in the realm. Thomas Cartwright, the leading Presbyterian, wrote to Lord Burleigh to dissuade the Marprelate Tracts, and Martin himself said "The Puritans are angry with me; I mean the Puritan preachers. And why? Because I am too open; because I jest. . . I am plain; I must needs call a spade a spade, a pope a pope." Martin Marprelate's scurrility and irreverence delighted the groundlings; his wit and his home thrusts delighted courtiers. Who was he?

The secret of the authorship was as well kept as that of Junius in the

eighteenth century, though the printers of the Marprelate Tracts were caught and tortured. One suspect, John Penry, was hanged - though for a different offence. Another, John Udall, was sentenced to death and died in prison. A third, Job Throckmorton, was indicted by Warwick Assizes in the summer of 1590 for "making certain scornful and satirical libels under the name of Martin". Throckmorton appeared in court at court - certainly Lord Chancellor Hatton, possibly even the Queen herself. He was neither condemned, acquitted nor pardoned but, as Leland H. Carlson puts it, "kept dangling on the hook" until he died in 1601.

seventeenth-century touch. In the House he supported what Neale called "stark revolution" - the abolition of the existing ecclesiastical courts and laws.

But in 1943 Donald McGinn re-visited the case for Penry, and in 1966 he published a book to prove it. Leland H. Carlson's object is to refute this idea, and to establish finally the case for Throckmorton. With a long and distinguished career behind him as a student of Puritanism, he speaks with authority, and he seems to me to have succeeded in his task. Both Penry and Throckmorton denied being Marprelate, though Throckmorton (Professor Carlson argues) worded his denial very carefully and may have been equivocating; he is certainly the more likely of the two to have resorted to equivocation.



A Puritan family - from "The Whole Psalms in Four Parts", 1563.

So it was never legally established who Martin Marprelate was. Some twenty-two claimants have been produced, most of them unlikely; but in recent years the possibilities have been reduced to John Penry, Job Throckmorton - both of whom certainly had some share in producing and distributing the tracts - or some totally unknown third party, who was not so involved. A scholarly consensus slowly grew up pointing to Throckmorton as the man. Formidable names supported the case for him: Edward Arber, Sidney Lee, F. J. Powicke, Dover Wilson, William Pierce, Patrick Collinson. The case seemed to be clinched when in 1957 Sir John Neale established that Throckmorton had got into serious trouble in the Parliament of 1586-87 for making three powerful, witty and savagely ironical speeches. He had been elected MP for Warwick after threatening to invoke the rights of the commonality to vote - a very

pleading, given to apostrophe, but the tracts, the choice between them must be determined largely on stylistic grounds.

Here Carlson's case is overwhelming. Penry, a Welsh boy educated at Oxford, was no mean writer. He published a number of tracts, all but the first signed with his own name. He was capable of reasoned argument, eloquence and fervour. But in none of his writings does he show any trace of the jaunty, dramatic, flying style that was Marprelate's speciality. Part of the case against Penry rests indeed on his specific statement that though he agreed with the content of the tracts, he was less happy about their style.

Throckmorton's speeches in the Commons, on the other hand, reveal exactly the characteristics of Marprelate's style, and also the exuberant rashness, the arrogant self-confidence, of the tracts. And

The theoretical possibility still remains that there is a third unknown author, for whom both Penry and Throckmorton were front men. It is impossible entirely to disprove this, but it seems highly unlikely. There is evidence that both Penry and Throckmorton were involved in the illegal printing: Throckmorton took great

pleasure in the work, and he was a powerful case. It is somewhat circular, since it rests on parallels between the Marprelate Tracts and the writings which he attributes to Throckmorton. But since some of the latter date back to 1572, Penry was far too young to have been their author.

The more we study the writings of Marprelate, the less easy it is to generalize about "Puritanism". His racy, scurrilous style shocked some of the godly in his own day; it is total incompatible with the traditional "killjoy" image of Puritanism which Margot Heinemann's recent admirable book on Middleton so effectively demolished. Marprelate treats solemn theological issues in a highly jocular manner. Carlson has counted fifty-eight allusions to gambling, card-playing, betting and drinking in works which he attributes to Throckmorton, thirty-three of them in the Marprelate Tracts. Throckmorton seems to have regarded "influence-peddling, bribery, promotion-seeking, persecution, injustice and tyranny" as graver sins than going to the theatre or playing bowls - though he enjoyed rebuking Bishop Aylmer for playing bowls on the Sabbath. In his attack on the bishops he struck a popular chord.

A Good Word

Nacrouis is a good word. We must make a poem Around it, or to one side, or behind it. Nacrouis? Not some drab anecdote of oysters. No, something richer in human interest -

The nacrouis face of a leper observed in Asia, Standing up stern in the back of a trishaw, Arched over the driver, the driver bent over The handlebars and pumping away at the pedals.

A sight to remember, far rarer than pearls! In the centre of town, in a public transport, A towering leper, and a terrified driver, Striking through traffic, tin can at his tail.

- Or is it a chariot hurrying nearer? The chariot's him, He's in it. Along with us. There's scant time left for poems, and we don't like This one. A pity we ever stopped for nacrouis.

D. J. Enright

pains to cover his tracks here, so that the printers and distributors could not with certainty implicate him, even under torture. Why should he have taken part in the day-to-day work of illegal printing if he was not the author? He was a man of considerable standing, a former MP. His father was a second cousin and friend of Queen Katherine Parr; another cousin was one of Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting. Throckmorton's devotion to the Puritan cause, unlike Penry's, was not a career. Indeed the difference between the treatment Throckmorton received and the "rackings and great tortments" applied to the humble printers, and the execution of Penry, is striking. "The knives durst not search my house", he said haughtily. "If they had, I would have counsel [chased] them, they know well enough."

Throckmorton's aristocratic self-confidence, paradoxically, fits in with the demotic style of the Marprelate Tracts. He had the arrogance of an established gentleman well aware of his own abilities, determined to use them on behalf of what he believed to be God's cause, with no inhibitions about appealing to the vulgar. He was not displeased with the sensation his pamphlets caused, but had no inclination to seek martyrdom. The ultimate dropping of the case against him must have resulted from court influence, perhaps (as Carlson suggests) through his lady-in-waiting cousin's influence with Elizabeth. Fortunately it was only in 1591 that the cousin entered into the clandestine marriage to Sir Walter Raleigh which led to several years' disgrace for both of them.

Carlson has entirely demolished the case for Penry as Marprelate. By the end one is left feeling almost sorry for Donald McGinn, so thoroughly he has been pulverized for his "inaccurate statements", his "garbling of evidence" and "violation of the canons of historical scholarship". Carlson has come as near as anyone to establishing the case for Throckmorton. His new attributions add a formidable body of work to Throckmorton's credit. This valuable book puts us in a much better position to assess Marprelate/Throckmorton's position in English literature and English history. John Carey, a good judge, described Marprelate as "the best English satirist before Dryden" - no mean claim, since that means better than Marston and Richard Overton.

The more we study the writings of Marprelate, the less easy it is to generalize about "Puritanism". His racy, scurrilous style shocked some of the godly in his own day; it is total incompatible with the traditional "killjoy" image of Puritanism which Margot Heinemann's recent admirable book on Middleton so effectively demolished. Marprelate treats solemn theological issues in a highly jocular manner. Carlson has counted fifty-eight allusions to gambling, card-playing, betting and drinking in works which he attributes to Throckmorton, thirty-three of them in the Marprelate Tracts. Throckmorton seems to have regarded "influence-peddling, bribery, promotion-seeking, persecution, injustice and tyranny" as graver sins than going to the theatre or playing bowls - though he enjoyed rebuking Bishop Aylmer for playing bowls on the Sabbath. In his attack on the bishops he struck a popular chord.

On the admission of Bishop Cooper himself, "the who can most bitterly inveigh against bishops and preachers, that can most uncharitably slander their lives and doings, thinketh of himself, and is thought of others, as the most zealous and earnest furtherer of the gospel. . . A lamentable state of time it is, wherein such intemperate boldness is permitted without any bridle at all." From the invention of printing, governments had tried to control the press, with varying success. England had a less developed bureaucracy than Continental absolute monarchies. Policing had to be left mainly to the

Stationers' Company and to the machinery of the church — the nearest to a bureaucracy the Tudor monarchy ever had. (When Archbishop Whitgift recommended Richard Bancroft for promotion to Bishop of London, it was his detective work against Marprelate that he especially praised.) This role of the church did not endear it to critics of the régime.

It is possible that the scandalous success of the Marprelate Tracts, and the savage episcopal repression which followed, may have strengthened the hands of the staid Puritans: at least it was easier for them to get into print between 1590 and 1640. But Marprelate reminds us of the popular radical wing in English Protestantism, which looks back through Simon Fish, Latimer, Lever and Crowley to the native Lollard tradition which A. G. Dickens has studied. He remarks, very justifiably, that many of the things late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Lollards said would seem more appropriate to the age of Voltaire. So would Marprelate.

Marprelate shared the fierce anticlericalism of the Lollards. "Reformation importeth the overthrow of the state of the clergy", he claimed — doctrine that Puritan ministers would hardly have agreed with but which was an opinion expressed by laymen from Lollards to seventeenth-century sectaries. Marprelate claimed kinship with Langland's *Piers Plowman*, which sixteenth-century protestants associated (wrongly) with the Lollards. Carlson draws attention to an edition of *Piers Plowman* published in 1589 whose title-page paraphrases Martin's *Epistle*, and describes *Piers* as "grandfather of Martin Marprelate". The type is similar to that of the Marprelate Tracts. Carlson suggests that it may have been issued by Throckmorton. It was certainly published by someone sympathetic to Marprelate.

This adds interest to the subsequent history of the Marprelate Tracts. Between 1590 and 1640 they were unpublished, but not forgotten. John Bastwick, one of Archbishop Laud's victims, had read them. There was a flurry of reprints of and allusions to Marprelate as soon as the censorship collapsed in 1640. Recent work by Margaret Lienesch and Marie Gimmelfarb-Brack has shown that Richard Overton, the future Leveller, was echoing Marprelate from his very first publication in 1640, and have suggested that he may have been responsible for reprinting the tracts. From 1645 onwards he published a series of works by Martin Marprelate, Junior, or Martin Marprelate, which suggests that he expected his public to recognize allusions to Marprelate. Overton's crisp prose has all the wit and sparkle, all the moral intensity, of his model.

In 1645 he dedicated *The Arraignement of Mr. Persecution* to the Westminster Assembly of Divines — an imperiously ironical start to a tract which attacked all that the Westminster divines held sacred. In his character of "young Martin" Overton pointed out that the Assembly had spent more time in securing their own income from tithes than in producing a Directory of worship. ("For

he is an infidel and denieth the faith, that doth not provide for his family.") Young Martin offered himself as a candidate for a rich living:

Young Martin can thunder-thump the pulpit, oh, can stare most devoutly, rail and howl most reverently, storm most tempestuously even till he foam at the mouth most precisely... Oh, Martin hath it at his finger's end, he's an university man, skilled in the tongues and sciences, and can sophisticate any text, oh he is excellent at false glosses and scholastic interpretations, he can wrest the Scriptures most neatly, tell the people it is thus in the original, an excellent man to make a presbyter!

William Walswyn and other Levellers followed suit.

The shocking thing about Marprelate was that his rollicking popular style, in addition to making intellectuals laugh, also brought the Puritan cause into the market place. Isaac Walton tells us, on the authority of an Italian visitor, that thanks to Martin "the very women and shopkeepers were able... to determine what laws were fit to be made concerning church-government. Men of the slightest learning, and the most ignorant of the common people were made for a... reformation of religion". That was the audience to which the Levellers were to appeal. By the Marprelate Tracts, Bancroft said, "the interest of the people in kingdoms is greatly advanced".

Bishop Cooper — one of Marprelate's principal victims — agreed that "if this outrageous spirit of boldness be not stopped speedily, I fear he will prove himself to be not only Marprelate but Mar-prince, Mar-state, Mar-law, Mar-magistrate and all together, until he bring it to an Anabaptist equality and communion... Their whole drift, as it may seem, is to bring the government of the church to a democracy or aristocracy. The principles and reasons whereof, if they be once by experience familiar in the minds of the common people, it is greatly to be feared that they will very easily transfer the same to the government of the Commonwealth". As they shoot at bishops now, so will they do at the nobility if they be suffered, the Earl of Hertford agreed. That was indeed what the Levellers tried to do.

The argument that "if we make a party in the church we must come to a party in the Commonwealth" was used by the bishops for the next fifty years: Oliver Cromwell was to refute it at the beginning of the Long Parliament. The Levellers took up Marprelate's style, but they spoke to a wider audience for a longer period of time than he had been able to do. In the end they too were suppressed; but not before they had established as a tradition what had previously been a nine days' wonder. Through them Martin Marprelate — or perhaps we should say Job Throckmorton? — exercised a direct influence on the evolution of that conversation prose which looks forward to Bunyan and Defoe. In the 1660s Charles II's censor aimed at suppressing "the great matters of the popular style". Fortunately he did not succeed.



Bucolic Burns. The poet was also a farmer for much of his life; this ink drawing, showing Burns and other figures gathering the harvest, by William Bell Scott H.R.S.A. is included in a sale of Important Victorian and Modern Scottish Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings at Christie's & Edmondson's, 164-166 Bath Street, Glasgow, on Thursday October 1.

Covert meanings

By Pat Rogers

IRVIN EHRENPREIS:
Acts of Implication
158pp. University of California Press. £9.
0 520 04047 3

This short book, subtitled "Suggestion and Covert Meaning in the Works of Dryden, Swift, Pope, and Austen", consists of lectures delivered at Berkeley in 1978. It forms a pendant to the author's previous study, *Literary Meaning and Augustan Values* (1974). The four essays are agreeable to read, as they must have made for pleasant listening in the lecture-room. Irvin Ehrenpreis possesses many of the highest virtues in a critic: he is immediately well-read, intellectually combative, and unfailingly lucid. It is a relief to come on an academic writer who can deal with large and complex issues without any resort to opaque jargon.

But the volume does begin with a mystery. The dedication, to Fredson Bowers, takes the form of two unidentified lines of Greek poetry. Such coded messages are a red rag waved before the tribe of reviewers, who like to feel they are privileged bystanders of the creative process. Thus excluded, I was duly led into research: the lines turned up in the *Oedipus at Colonus*. They are spoken by the hero in what A. J. A. Waldock called "the lengthy courtship between Theseus and Oedipus". Jebb translates, "and in the future still give me thy loyal care, as thou has given it to this hour". It can

hardly be that Ehrenpreis is casting himself as old, blind and peevish — for he is, I am sure, none of these things — or that he is asking for a tranquil burial in the Attic soil of Charlottesville. Perhaps the author's desire to retrieve a critical importance lost in our own age has induced this Oedipal fantasy.

Literary Meaning was a strong, brave book. It argued for a realistic mode of intentionalism in criticism; it exposed many of the reigning follies, such as the ambition to "discover golden irony in the leaden mines of Defoe"; it subjected the easy invocation of "persona" to powerful and witty attack. Ehrenpreis believes that the best poetry "overflows, reaching beyond literature into reality". He sees formalist criticism as "denying the impulse that patently drives every great artist. He is always trying to say something of immense importance to him: this is what he (not the poem) means; this is his intention"; this is what we must apprehend. Such unfashionable ideas were presented with great dash, and the book is perhaps the best that Ehrenpreis has ever written, as well as the most important confrontation between literary theory and eighteenth-century literature during the past decade. Its impact would have been greater had not Ehrenpreis incautiously filled out the volume with studies of works such as *Gulliver's Travels* and Pope's *Epistle to a Lady*, texts which no self-respecting literary theorist could deem required reading.

Acts of Implication puts similar ideas into practice, but its explicit theoretical content is slight. This is because Ehrenpreis discovered, as he tells us, that "the historical contexts of the works contributed far more to one's understanding of them than any system of analysis". Therefore, although the critic has a definite view about the way the authors in question should be read, he produces contextual readings rather than an incoherent, if not a nihilistic, generalization of his many insights into a statement of how historically determined messages are generated within a text, nor how they are properly extractable. He simply extracts them. He tells us that his notion of "implication" follows that of E. D. Hirsch, but actually it is yours and mine, the common-or-garden usage of the term for generations. To discover verbal nuance, concealed allusion, indirect statement, subtle shifts of tone — *huc opus, hic labor est*.

And a worthwhile task, too, when it produces writing of such sustained interest. Ehrenpreis, sees Dryden's heroic tragedies as replete with the effects of romance, and stresses their high sexual content. On Swift, the author finds a deeper social identification with his audience in the

Drapier's Letters than in the *Examiner*. The finest essay is that on Pope: his methods are not new (issuando revelation, imagery, etc), but the insights are fresh and eloquently expressed. For example: "Pope devised methods of attracting and reassuring those who might be hostile to his brilliance." Or again: "He conveys a deep sympathy with the voluptuous impulse and deep uncertainty as to its consequence." And on *The Rape of the Lock*: "There is nothing placid, domestic, or parental about [it]. Its few snatches of security only prepare us for long passages of delightful uneasiness." Last, comes Jane Austen, in whose novels the author detects a kind of "metonymic" characterization, with men and women placed according to their interests, homes and physical attributes.

Ehrenpreis says so many things in a few pages, and says them so plainly, that he is bound to invite disagreement. For my part, I am not sure that the Drapier's use of scriptural references (especially those as familiar as David and Goliath) is pervasive enough to give him a "priestly" character in the Augustan milieu. Certain social judgments are likewise debatable. Ehrenpreis says that in *Emma* "Mr. Woodhouse reposes at the peak of the social pyramid as Miss Bates stands at the bottom." Even if he means, what he does not say, "the bottom of the gender", this is slightly inaccurate. The point about Miss Bates and her family is that they have come down in the world; and this obsolete category of distressed gentlefolk formed a loop in the social system. That is what is so unforgivable about Emma's rudeness, as Mr Knightley does not fail to remind her. Again, Ehrenpreis excludes Lady Catherine de Bourgh from the aristocracy; it is true that she has married beneath her, but it is apparent that she retains much of her standing as the daughter of an earl — whatever her pretensions, there is no suggestion that her connections have suffered.

On matters more truly literary, some might be disposed to challenge the critic's view of Scott, which sees the novels as dominated by political and religious ideology to the detriment of personal issues. It could be argued that, on the contrary, *Waverley* is at bottom a mutant *Bildungsroman*, with the hero's fevers, conflicts and wanderings expressing his passage to manhood. On Jane Austen herself, Ehrenpreis seems to me judicious and sane — even if he thinks that Kitty Bennet was a "runaway girl" (I expect that her father also had a job to keep tracks of who was who). Throughout, he shows his capacity to harness learning and strong convictions to elucidate a wide range of literature.

BERNICE MARTIN:
A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change
272pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12.50.
0 631 12973 1

What was it like to be a Gallo-Roman, or live out the last days of the Byzantine Empire? We may be well placed to judge. Threatened by powerful enemies beyond the frontiers, heavily outnumbered by "barbarians", lulled by past prosperity and reluctant to face the reality of change, the former custodians of civilized strength and virtue became provincial and effete. No doubt they were "caring" and compassionate, tolerant of eccentricity, witty and amusing, intrigued by astrology and other cults, hooked on self-expression, ever more *avant-garde*. Did the sexes exchange roles, dress, and make-up? Was there a drug culture? How loud was the Dionysiac music? Did priests and teachers age the unimpaired? Did language itself decay? At all events, when the ramparts finally crumbled, there had been erosion from within.

Bernice Martin avoids this hazardous analogy; but her book inescapably suggests it. Don't be put off by the title: *A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change* might well have been called, by a more catchpenny publisher, *The Termites in Our Midst*.

But Mrs Martin gives no such hopes to academic fortune. As befits a lecturer in sociology (at Bedford College, University of London), she clocks her thesis in technical language which now and then becomes jargon. "This is the major reason why Ricoeur and others (Benjamin was a pioneer in this field) have attempted to graft phenomenology on to semiology in hermeneutic analysis." It would help us all, and might help even the writers of such sentences, if words like that were fined for obstruction. Drive past them, however, and you can explore a richly documented, wise and coherent account of the ways in which "our society" — as pop-sociologists incessantly say — is becoming de-structured, notably in the arts.

Life before the oil

By Venetia Newall

JAMES R. NICOLSON:
Shetland Folklore
221pp. Hale. £8.25.
0 7091 8824 2

The Shetland Islands received little attention from mainland Britain until 1971 when North Sea oil was discovered. The author of *Shetland Folklore*, which is more a study of Shetland folklife than its folklore, is a native Shetlander working as a consultant engineer for oil-related developments in the area. What a pity then that he has not chosen to study the impact of oil on the folklore of his homeland — a discovery which has effected as great a change in traditional island life as any event in its past history. The most casual visitor to the local bookshop will find one entitled "The Oil Rig". And as early as 1973 local people were performing a sketch featuring the Nord-Blues and its lament: "O hame wi dee; hame wi dee O hame! James R. Nicolson, presenting a backward-looking and somewhat romantic view of his island home, stores of tradition which in this age of materialism is in danger of being lost. Are we really so much more materialistic than the Victorians, or anyone else for that matter?

The author's style is sometimes strangely convoluted. Phrases like "Before the meal was commenced" and "Men who had done well out with Shetland" fall oddly upon the ear and some readers may puzzle

A generation on the spree

By Richard Mayne

In the last few decades [Mrs Martin writes] the Western world has experienced a transformation in the assumptions and habitual practices which form the cultural bedrock of the daily lives of ordinary people... The shift began as a sort of cultural revolution among a small minority of crusading radicals, and finished by altering some of our deepest — and therefore most customary and commonplace — habits and assumptions.

The book's dust-jacket shows a few examples. A middle-aged couple slumped in deck-chairs on a seaside prom are flanked by a group of mods or rockers; below them, West Indians loaf and glower, alongside a picture of white oriental cultists; on the bottom line, sullen-looking punks display jackets reading "Belsen was a gas", while a smiling, thick-lipped black man in a clown make-up seems to be wearing not only safety-pins through his ears but a tart through his forehead and a television antenna through his cheek. In the book itself, Mrs Martin itemizes the ways in which the counter-culture has removed familiar landmarks: in art, in rock music, in youth activities, in education, in social work, and even in the church:

If one looks only at the superficial, theatrical extravaganzas... the happenings, demonstrations, psychedelia and the rest, it is easy to assume that the counter-culture was merely trivial, ephemeral, a minor footnote in the margin of cultural history. From the viewpoint of the counter-culture's pioneers, it looks like a failed revolution. The argument of this book is that it was more significant than the first and less than the second. The counter-culture was an index to a whole new cultural style, a set of values, assumptions and ways of living which Talcott Parsons, with uncharacteristic exaggeration, has called the "Expressive Revolution". The 1960s were the transformation point. They exemplified for society at large, in striking ways, processes which would expand the frames

within which expressive possibilities were currently contained. By the mid-1970s many things which had seemed traumatic, shocking, revolutionary in the previous decade had been incorporated into mainstream culture. The pioneers of the 1960s had genuinely sought to remove the frames altogether, but in the event the consequences were less drastic. The frames stretched, sometimes a long way from their former contours, but they ultimately reasserted their nature as limits and margins.

Or, as Saul Bellow once put it, everyone nowadays behaves like a Bohemian artist, without producing any art. I sometimes get the feeling that British people, at least, imagine themselves as the cast of television sitcoms, exchanging weak wisecracks, or nodding in the light fantastic footsteps of Monty Python or *Not the Nine o'clock News*. It makes for spurious harmony, but hardly for solid achievement. Are we giggling while Rome burns?

I imagine — though I've no proof — that Mrs Martin fears we are. Her husband, David Martin, is a campaigner to save the Prayer Book from well-meant vandalism by tin-eared devotees of Series III; and Mrs Martin has some shrewd, understanding words about radical Anglican priests. "The clergy tend to represent their role as hapless providers of the rituals which go along with mere citizenship... Given the power of prevailing economic criteria and their own declining status, the clergy must insist on the fundamental usefulness and relevance of what they do, and religion-as-social-work fits that need." The snag is that when the Church becomes matter-of-fact and prosaic, people seek mystery and poetry elsewhere — at worst in murderous semi-voodoo sects, at best in near-fraudulent cults from the far-out East.

Mrs Martin develops this argument less fully than she might; but on education she is very acute. Social progress, she points out, has become one of education's goals; but the kind of education offered has not always helped the poorer families to whom it has been extended. On the

one hand, the "gentlemanly" ideal of non-utilitarian culture still overshadows useful and rewarding pursuits like engineering. On the other, the "permissive", unstructured, unstreamlined, and uncompetitive style of teaching has proved better suited to middle-class than to working-class pupils with fewer books and less pushy parents. In both ways, middle-class education has sold the working classes short.

At this point in Mrs Martin's book, some well-conditioned hackles may rise. Yes, one of her articles has been reprinted in the *Cox-Boysen Black Paper* 1975. Yes, she does explicitly welcome the return to more formal teaching that she detects since the mid-1970s — "even though the system will perhaps never be quite so 'formal and grammatical' again". But it would be wrong to regard her as a middle-class lady of the manor thanking God (in the 1662 version) for the preservation of the local grammar school. In the best-written and most attractive chapter of the book, she paints a glowing Hogartian picture of the working-class culture of the Lancashire cotton towns in which she grew up in the 1940s and 50s. This is not false nostalgia with the hardship and hunger left out, but a tribute to order and stability, which was reserved place for what Mrs Martin calls the "liminal" — roughly translatable as "sprees". The point she makes, with great authority and conviction, is that satisfactory living has to contain both routine and escape, responsibility and fecklessness, hard graft and sprees.

The "Expressive Revolution", by contrast, tended to be all spree. Made possible by affluence, it may

yet be curbed by slump. What remains certain, however, is that de-structuring, libertarianism, jeering at authority, and breaking all the rules, even without a slump or a counter-revolution, lead in the end to another kind of tyranny. Jeans, once a protest against natty suitings, become a uniform. In-group language and gesture become social ritual. Left-wing libertarians turn into witch-hunters. Charles Manson's "family" kills.

It may be, as Mrs Martin says, that the "Expressive Revolution" has now been absorbed, learnt from, exploited, and tamed. It may be that, all along, it was no more than a modern version of the Romantic Movement: Wordsworth as a radical hippie. I'm not so sure. For quite other reasons, I have lately been reading a great deal of material from the Second World War and its aftermath; and what strikes me most forcibly is the contrast between its tone and what is commonly acceptable now. One youngish woman, inquiring into wartime heroes, recently wondered whether they could be real. "They were so very idealistic," she mused. Another child of the 1940s, this time a BBC producer, astonished me by saying that he couldn't understand what impelled anyone to die for his country. In the wider world, governments give in to terrorists in order to save civilian hostages; protesters against the arms race sometimes imply that nothing can be worse than death; and anti-nuclear humour makes it almost impossible to praise courage, tradition, law, age, and authority without sounding like an idiot. We've come a long way since 1945. Are we on the way to 1453?

Dore Ashton ROSA BONHEUR

THE FIRST BIOGRAPHY FOR OVER SEVENTY YEARS OF THE MAJOR FRENCH PAINTER

"Whatever the verdict upon her work she is a part of the history of French art, above all of the animalier movement which played such a part in sculpture and painting. It is high time she was again considered." *Terence Mulvey, Daily Telegraph* £9.95

James Comyn IRISH AT LAW

"Not only a collection of funny stories, it is virtually a potted history of Ireland, as seen from the courts. James Comyn reminds us that Ireland is far more than a country of bombs, slaughter and suffering — it is a land rich in wit, charm and verbal thrust." *Fenton Bresler, Daily Mail* £8.50

Nicholas Salaman THE FRIGHTS

"A début to rejoice at. Exuberant, high-spirited and deftly plotted." *Paul Taylor, TLS*
"Salaman shows a genuine talent for constructive alarm, the nerve and ability to peep into the black holes of human awareness." *Norman Shrapnel, Guardian* £6.95

David Martin THE ROAD TO BALLYSHANNON

"Elegantly simple... powerful, haunting, beautifully reverberant story. It echoes with things unsaid and aches with melancholy mourning." *Graham Lord, Sunday Express*
"The stuff of ballads. Every word in this haunting tragic story is solid glinting into place to make one feel, under the surface of hopeless political causes, the simple instincts and energy of the old legends." *Nicholas Shakespeare, The Times* £6.95

Secker & Warburg

The century's contours

By John Stachniewski

C. A. PATRIDES and RAYMOND B. WADDINGTON (Editors):
The Age of Milton
330pp. Manchester University Press. £22.50.
0 7190 0770 4

This is a collection of eleven new essays on every discipline (except, curiously, European literature) for which the seventeenth century is an object of study. The three editors take different angles — humane, political, statistical — on the history of the period. Four more are in a broader, more literary or educational (though not religious) vein. Two deal with Milton and the late sixteenth century, and the last two with the century's political and religious life.

presence in the book's title seems until this point merely decorative — set about, belatedly perhaps, slanting the volume at literature.

Beyond the common period, there is a real principle of cohesion and not much attempt to emphasize what pertains to literature. Yet this editor, *l'abbé* *laissez faire*, permitting an autonomy to each discipline which a single interpretive standpoint, say Basil Willey's, necessarily denies, makes for exhilarating reading in which one's perspective on the period keeps shifting. Baffling, too, is the brevity with which the sum of knowledge in a discipline is compressed. The pressure towards pithiness and concision does not help. In the blindness of their own objectivity, of the mere round-up, the authors stamp an individual style on subjects to which they have contributed importantly. (C. E. Young goes off on his way, for example, to a polemic for defence of the

ones with his fellow historians A. H. Woolrych and Theodore Rabb.)

The book's chief usefulness should be as a map for research students, to guide them in neighbouring disciplines. Unlike and descriptive bibliographies, most of these articles deftly sketch the significant contours of their subject areas while at the same time discreetly advertising one to sources which expatiate on points raised. It is a shame, though, that the editors, having hit on the idea of numerical references to items in the bibliography, did not intervene on this technical point to ensure that these were consistently embedded in the text. Instead of bypassing the conventional footnote — the curse of which is that one does not know what kind of information it will contain — we are often given a doubly cumbersome footnote to a reference to an item given elsewhere.

Prying into odd corners

By Patricia Craig

JENNIFER JOHNSTON:

The Christmas Tree
167pp. Hamish Hamilton. £6.50.
0 241 10673 7

"Dying is an art," wrote Sylvia Plath; to write about the process of dying, bypassing the natural temptations to indulgence and excess, is no less so. The theme has attracted several novelists in the last year or two. May Sartori (*A Reckoning*) and Karen Gershon (*Burn Helen*) among them. Jennifer Johnston, whose new novel also has death as its subject, is a stricter stylist and a crisper commentator than these two. She deals unemotionally with her emotional material.

It is partly the personality of her heroine that makes the dry approach possible. We never doubt the genuineness of Constance Keating's avowal that death seems "an attractive alternative to life, which I have never found very satisfactory" — though she had, in fact, counted on a further twenty-five years, and made plans to fill them. Constance, stricken with leukemia at the age of forty-five, returns from London to her family home in Dublin (now empty, her father having died recently) to carry out her final wishes. With her, in a carry-over, she brings her nine-month-old daughter. The conception of this child, and Constance's association with the father, take up about a third of the novel. The other sections deal with the drastic present (a first-person account) and the more distant past; the childhood recollections are suitably heightened to fit the tense mood.

Jennifer Johnston has always been preoccupied with images of decay and disintegration — the decline of the Irish "big house" in her first two novels, the First World War in *How Many Miles to Babylon?*, the diminishing of the grand ideals of Irish republicanism in *Shadows on Our Skin*. Now it is physical decay: "The one thing I can't bear is my own emaciated appearance". In *The Christmas Tree* she considers death as a steady movement towards obliteration, and imagines the shifts in perception the state would entail.

There are all kinds of links and connections between her six novels. Mr Prendergast's dead soldier brother, in *The Captains and the Kings*, provides a name (Alexander) and a setting (the trenches) for the hero of *Babylon*, her third and perhaps least satisfactory novel (there is something a little forced and melodramatic in the fate that overtakes its protagonist, and these qualities are at odds with the wry, ironic spirit of the other five books).

Big Jim, a minor character in *The Gates*, spends his days reliving the heroic events of the 1916 Rising and its aftermath up to the Civil War; and this is the era which the author re-creates so authoritatively in *The Old Jest*. The young heroines of these works are similar too: both nieces of the big house, both jaunty and opinionated, each determined to make her mark. In them, at their rapacious, age, incautiousness, — which shapes the plots — is an agreeable trait.

Turgenev's saying, "Death is an old jest, but it comes to everyone", which gave a title to Jennifer Johnston's last novel, gives a theme to the current one. Constance Keating's is a harrowing but not a sordid end. She never exhibits the depressing querulousness of the invalid but only her own characteristic abrasiveness, magnified. Illness does not make her ineffectual. The difficult younger daughter of parents slightly deficient in humour and understanding, she goes her own way, as she has always done. "You are... just the same as ever", her sister Barbara ("Bibi") complains, meaning that she is capricious and wilful. Pleasant, ordinary, overbearing Bibi, described in her youth as a "super" girl, stands in the novel for unimaginative good will and energy. (She takes over without protest the care of Constance's baby.) Her manner produces

a tangled reaction in her sister — a compound of guilt, gratitude and exasperation.

Bibi, in middle age, is stuck with an affection of her girlfriend; a habit of inserting French phrases into her conversation. "Comme c'est beau," she said, stopping in the doorway. She is one of those purveyors of clichés in Jennifer Johnston's work who are so easily discomfited by sharpness or banter. They believe in acting for the best: their view of life is very simple. An early version of the type is Eileen Evers, the rector's wife in *The Captains and the Kings*, who is driven by some fearful impulse of kindness to thrust her ministrations on poor, reclusive Mr Prendergast. It takes a fair amount of plain speaking before this obtuse lady is discouraged from acting the part of the sincere friend. Handsome, humourless Harry, in *The Old Jest*, is another whose responses are irritatingly unwary, from the point of view of the playful heroine. After she has teased, disconcerted and embarrassed him, and he has gone off affronted, "I really want him to love me", Nancy Gulliver announces ruefully to the cat.

Insensitivity to the true wishes of others makes these characters fit subjects for mild satirical treatment. Their behaviour is entertainingly awful. (Bibi's infelicitous choice of words — "The children are dying to see you" — is a mark of her unnerveful clumsiness.) They also act as a kind of counterpoint to the significant friendships in the books. Jennifer Johnston is peculiarly susceptible to the charm of the unexpected alliance. In story after story, traditional antagonists, like the aloof old gentleman and the semi-delinquent boy of her first novel, develop a cautious liking for one another. (Only in *The Gates* do we find an element of sexual feeling to complicate the irrepressible affinity which subdues differences of class and outlook.) The friendships prosper for a time before some outside disturbance or irresistible opportunity leads to an act of betrayal: the faithful ones are not greatly to blame.

The pattern is broken in the new novel: though a lucky attachment between two unlike people comes into this narrative too, it is not at the centre of the theme. Bridie May, a founding employed by Bibi as a kind of nursemaid to her sister (wayward Constance refusing to go into hospital), immediately brings a sense of calm and order to the ill-kept house. Bridie's childlike elation — she is savouring for the first time her break with the Catholic orphanage where she grew up — makes her a pleasing companion. She makes no demands and creates no discordant effects. The nurse has seen to it that she is trained in obedience, but she is not meek or servile.

Her presence helps, but Constance is really beyond the need for ordinary discourse. The dying are properly solipsistic; and one of the least of the preoccupations ascribed to them is the effort to impose a form on the events of the past — to give the sharpest edge to the irony inherent in this circumstance. Constance is a novelist — a would-be one at least, who perseveres in spite of radical discouragement from a supercilious executive: in publishing, she goes on writing as long as she can hold a pen. This is an optimistic gesture. There is an implication — nowhere overtly expressed — that her last manuscript will not be valueless.

The impulse to relive the past is there, but it is not indulged in thoughtlessly. When Constance dwells on her childhood it is not with nostalgia but with the most telling exactitude.

We, Bibi and I, were sent ahead to walk with Nanny. Socks pulled tight up to the knees and held with black elastic garters that left a pattern on your legs that never faded through the winter months. Hats tied firmly under the chin with velvet ribbons that matched the collars of our coats. The rector's voice tumbled from peeling walls to peeling walls as he prayed for the soldiers and sailors fighting in the war. ... I never really gave

it all a second thought and Bibi turned to Charles and Rome with an enthusiasm that turned as the years went by to an almost evangelical sternness; gaiety and happiness were replaced by duty and virtue.

Middle-class, Protestant Dublin in the middle years of the century: the later dances and tennis parties belong to this steady, uninspiring world too. It's a world that Bibi (whose only transgression was to marry a Catholic and adopt his religion) inhabits naturally; she is caught in a number of outgoing poses, captivating everyone around her, while adolescent Constance glowers in an ugly yellow dress. The girls' mother, who died distressingly in hospital some years before the onset of Constance's illness, materializes in the empty house to reprimand her young daughter for continuing eccentricity. "You always had to be difficult." This is neither exactly an apparition nor a remembered voice sounding in Constance's head, but rather a matter of one shading into the other. It's not a new device of Jennifer Johnston's. Mr Prendergast also experiences brisk, ironic confrontations with admonitory figures out of the past. And Minnie McMahon, in *The Gates*, holds dialogues with her conscience (a ghost, she calls it: "Not you again"), supplying the recriminations herself — rather like Gavin Burke, in Brian Moore's *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, who comically projects his misgivings and self-accusations onto an eleven-inch statue of the Divine Infant of Prague.

Constance's allies are Bridie May and the doctor, Bibi (an old friend

who once wanted to marry her). These two understand the courage behind her refusal of comforts and technical aids to dying. Constance is not expecting a miracle or a revelation; she attaches her hopes for productive feeling to an object whose connotations, for her, are purely secular: a small Christmas tree festooned with blue lights. It is the middle of December. "The snow had stopped but the east wind was still blowing bitterly." If you could choose your time to die, Constance thinks, this would be a good moment. A sad tale's best for winter.

Dying Constance is one of Jennifer Johnston's gallant drinkers: Mr Prendergast, Nancy Gulliver's Aunt Mary and Major McMahon, who prefers his own boot room to the public bar, are others. Drink does not make these people tiresome or disorderly; it is a gesture merely, against stiffness or fuss. Whiskey — the water of life — keeps Constance going at the point of death. (When she can no longer keep food down, she jokes gamely about Augustus who wouldn't eat his soup.) She is waiting — like Yeats in Auden's poem — to disappear in the dead of winter; and also for a Polish Jew named Jacob Weinberg who may or may not come to claim his daughter (Constance's daughter). If he does, it will save the child from being brought up decently in Bibi's Catholic home.

Jennifer Johnston has always been expert in catching the broken-off utterances of those whose sentences peter out as confusion falls upon their thoughts; a jumpy, agitated prose style, all interruptions and

ellipses, is probably the best way to render agitations and upsets, in which her books abound. *The Christmas Tree* is colder and quieter (though it has moments of high spirit). Its setting, between the extremes of country mansions with thistles up to the windowsills and ten bedrooms standing empty, and the kitchen houses and gimcrack flats of battered Derry, which she dealt with earlier, gets close to suburbia and the patterns of ordinary life — though the author allows herself plenty of scope for that humorous prying into odd corners which she does so well.

She is an Irish writer who has made good use of the striking subject matter the country offers. I can think of no moral problem more vividly or economically set out than the one involved in the little drama of social vicissitudes and class relations which occurs in *The Gates*: do the gates belong, by rights, at the end of the overgrown driveway where they have stood for more than a hundred years; or to the dreadful Americans whose great-grandfather carved them? The author wisely makes no comment; there is more to this issue than a simple tussle between the run-down and the jumped-up. *Shadows on Our Skin*, her novel about the present troubles in the North, is, for all its seriousness of purpose and its painful authenticity, the most engaging piece of fiction to come out of that dismal conflict. To her new novel Jennifer Johnston brings those attributes that have already made her work so impressive: assurance, clarity of tone, and a style perfectly balanced between bravado and delicacy.

Doleful dichotomies

By Peter Kemp

BARRY HINES:

Looks and Smiles
219pp. Michael Joseph. £6.95.
0 7181 1877 4

Early in Barry Hines's new novel, *Looks and Smiles*, an unemployed teenager flicks through a Youth Opportunities leaflet. The headline reads: WHO GOES WHERE? and underneath it, a photograph showed an optimistic-looking group of school-leavers, standing outside a Careers Office. The articles inside the paper were optimistic too, with success stories featured on every page. Contemptuously shredding such flimsily cheerful stuff, Hines's book replaces it with its opposite: not up-beat propaganda, but down-beat propaganda. As predictably dismal as next month's unemployment figures, *Looks and Smiles* is a calculatedly dispiriting parable, spelling out, in block capitals, the inequities and inequalities of the recession.

As Hines's last book, *The Price of Coal* showed very clearly, he is a writer who likes to make use of stark, didactic contrasts. There. Public Relations travesty was damningly juxtaposed with the actualities of work. Disgraced, the first half itemized the humdrum surrounding a royal visit to a mine, all signs of dirt and danger being farcically camouflaged. The second half, portraying the aftermath of an explosion in the same pit, let grim realities erupt through the whitewash, with effort now channelled into shovelling rubble from bodies rather than burying fact under bustle.

In *Looks and Smiles*, simple oppositions are set up again. The gloomy plights of Mick and Alan, two Northern teenagers, are thrown into relief against the artificial brightness of official hand-outs. After trudging futilely in search of work round their local waste-land of precariously-surviving firms, shuttered shops, dilapidated high-rise flats and bulldozed terraces, the two boys head off in different directions. Alan joins the Army — presented, along with the police, as a rare growth-area in Thatcher's Britain, Mick, staying at home, slumps into

depressed inertia. Seen initially (in a chapter that recalls the school episodes in *Kes*) as healthily anarchic, both degenerate: hard-up Mick takes to petty crime; Alan graduates from his Army training, and a bout of service in Belfast, as a fully-paid-up thug. Boozily stealing cars and breaking noses, sniggeringly brandishing a plastic bullet as a symbol of his prowess, gloating over memories of getting stuck-in in the Bog Side, he makes nervously pilfering Mick seem a tame law-abider.

Purposelessness demoralizes one of them; regimentation brutalizes the other. Relationships suffer too, as Hines illustrates through the nowhere-to-go affair of Mick and his girl-friend, Karen. Chronically the humiliating handicaps imposed by lack of money, *Looks and Smiles* obviously aims to be a 1980s version of *Love on the Dole*. Next to Greenwood's novel, though, it looks very thin: more of a skeletal fable than a properly fleshed-out fiction. As usual in Hines, doily indignation sympathy for working-class life is not matched by an ability to reproduce it very compellingly. The dialogue — given a gritty authenticity in the Loach/Garnett adaptations of his novels — tends to be colourless and standardized, never really capturing the vivid, wayward idioms of Northern working-class speech. And this, along with the schematic quality of his fiction, stops the characters ever becoming more than drably representative types: flat as casualty-statistics, they are drained of any interesting individuality. Besides the simplistic nature of the psychological and social comment, the tone is often crude. Sarcasm regularly stands in for irony, as right-wing clichés are knocked aside by left-wing ones: "According to the papers, the unions were to blame for all the economic ills of the country. They were too greedy (i.e. tried to keep up with rising prices), too strong (i.e. organized), always on strike (i.e. only as a last resort) and... communist-inspired (i.e. disagreed with management policies)." Never one to understate his case, Hines heaps up instances of the mess made by public spending cuts until his novel starts to sound like an aggrieved letter to the local council: "The bus service through the estate had been cancelled" (many of the

led", "most of the street lamps had been switched off early as part of the expenditure cuts", "the refuse collectors had gone on strike as a protest against further redundancies". The Transport Department had been forced to dismiss half the cleaning staff because of the latest cuts in public expenditure". A book in which a character can't lean across to ask someone the time without noticing that he's reading a paper with the headline "GOVT AXES FALLS ON JOB Schemes", *Looks and Smiles*, for all its decency of intent, repeatedly consents into morose overkill. Never escaping from the doctrinaire and the diagrammatic, it remains at the level of a tract for the times, rather than a novel that involuntarily portrays them.

In brief

By T. J. Binyon

BEN HEALEY:

Last Ferry from the Lido
189pp. Robert Hale. £5.75.
0 7091 8781 5

Portrait painter Paul Hedley is in Venice, painting a grand old lady of Venetian society. On the Lido he meets an American girl who says she's being followed by a balloon seller, and from then on in the pace never drops below a gallop, as the characters race after the most sensational act of discovery of the century. The plot is perhaps overly energetic, but the light and amusing tone, together with a pleasant Venetian background, keeps one from getting too puffed.

DONALD MACKENZIE:
The Last of the Boatriders
190pp. Macmillan. £5.50.
0 333 318137

Forced by investment losses to come out of retirement, aging commandeer Philip Drury picks up his former partner and plans a final killing on a Caribbean cruise, only to discover that two young men in the same line of business are already working the area. As carefully planned and as neatly put together as Drury's last

Eternal triangles

By T. J. Binyon

D. S. HIGGINS:

Rider Haggard: The Great Storyteller
266pp. Cassell. £9.95.
0 304 30827 7

PETER HAINING (Editor):

The Best Short Stories of Rider Haggard
255pp. Michael Joseph. £7.50.
0 7181 2010 8

In Haggard's late novel, *When the World Shook* (1919), three heretics, Arbutnot, Bickley and Bastin, shipwrecked on a Pacific island, discover a crystal casket containing the body of Oro, who put himself into a state of suspended animation 250,000 years ago. With the help of a hypodermic syringe filled with a strychnine cocktail, strong black coffee laced with brandy, and concentrated meat extract, they revive him, in gratitude for which he threatens to cause a second flood by changing the course of the immense fiery gyroscope which hums round inside the earth. "Gad, what an undeveloped and joyous imagination you have," Kipling remarked on reading it.

It almost seems as if D. S. Higgins is at the moment performing the same revivifying service — metaphorically speaking, of course — for Rider Haggard. Last year he published an edition of the author's diaries, and now follows this with a new biography. Of course, Haggard's reputation, unlike Oro's breathing, has never been completely suspended. Peter Haining, in the introduction to his selection of Haggard's short stories, slightly overstates the depth of the oblivion into which it has sunk. Obviously *King Solomon's Mines* has scarcely lost any vitality since it first appeared in 1885. Almost the same might be said of *Allan Quatermain* and *She*; but it might be slightly surprising to learn that there are nearly twenty of Haggard's novels in print at the present time, including not only the obvious choices, but also such esoteric items as *Mr Meeson's Will* (1888), *The Spirit of Bambastie* (also known as *Benita*) (1906), and *Wisdom's Daughter* (1923) — Ayesha's autobiography — described by Mr Haining as a "now forgotten and rare novel".

Is a new biography of Haggard really needed, given that we already have the two volumes of the writer's autobiography, *The Days of My Life*, published posthumously in 1926, Lilius Haggard's life of her father, *The Cloak that I Left* (1951) and Morton Cohen's biography: *Rider Haggard, His Life and Works* (1967)? Mr Higgins treats some episodes with more, others with less detail than his predecessors; and he has uncovered some new facts. But he has nothing particularly sensational to reveal.

Instead, he offers us a psychological theory. He is not content merely to tell the story of Haggard's life, he also endeavours to explain it. He looks for a reason for the compulsive scribbling, followed by the equally compulsive dedication to public service. He tries to resolve the contradictions of the writer's personality: the contrast, for example, between the bluff, hearty, practical country squire and the self-doubting depressive, obsessed with thoughts of death. "Life is practically behind me, with its many failures and few successes," Haggard wrote in his diary in July 1914, when he was probably the best-known author alive, and a successful public figure as well. Though Mr Higgins's psychological analysis occasionally seems simplistic, and his use of the novels as a source of primary evidence not always judicious, his conclusions, on the whole, are convincing and do much to explain the constant repetition of one or two motifs in Haggard's work.

The most important event in Haggard's life, as Mr Higgins sees it, occurred in 1874, when at the age of eighteen, he was sent to a crammer in London to prepare for the Foreign Office Entrance Examination. He

met, and fell violently in love with, a girl some three years older than himself. In his autobiography he refers to her only as Lilith, and calls her "one of the three really lovely women whom I have seen in my life" (the other two being the Duchess of Leinster and "a village girl at Bradenham who was reported to be the daughter of a gentleman"). His daughter — who must have known most of the story, but felt unable to reveal it — more objectively describes her as having "a rather heavy, placid face, blue eyes, and a mass of gold

sole trustee of the Jackson fortune. Archer seems to have been an archetypal Victorian bad hat. He kept his family in luxury, but paid for this and for his gambling by embedding the funds. When discovered he fled to Africa to avoid arrest, leaving Lilly and the children behind. Haggard found them a new home. Later Lilly followed her husband to Africa, after his death returned to England with an incurable disease, settled in East Anglia near Haggard, and died in 1919.



den-brown, curling hair". The heaviness and placidity are borne out by her photograph, reproduced in Mr Higgins's book. For he has discovered Lilith's identity — Mary Elizabeth (Lilly) Jackson, a Yorkshire heiress — pieced together the history of her relationship with Haggard, and sees it — and is undoubtedly right to do so — as the most important in the author's life.

Having unexpectedly obtained a place on the staff of Sir Henry Bulwer, the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor of Natal, Haggard left at short notice for Africa in 1875. He considered himself unofficially engaged, and Lilly promised to wait for him. In the event his stay in Africa was prolonged, and in 1878 he learnt that Lilly had married Francis Archer, a banker and stockbroker,

Mr Higgins has much less to go on in reconstructing Haggard's side of the relationship, but he believes that, as a result of Lilly's marriage, Haggard threw himself into a number of affairs, probably with native women, which he afterwards looked back on with guilt; that his own marriage, in 1880, was very much one of convenience which, with time, became less and less satisfying; that the death in 1891 of his only son Jock while Haggard and his wife were in Mexico was seen as a punishment for earlier transgressions; and that, throughout his life, he loved Lilly, as his daughter writes, with that "affection that transcends all earthly passion and stretches out hands beyond the grave".

The overwhelming importance which the relationship had for him is

amply demonstrated in those early novels set in contemporary English society, when the actual events are nakedly portrayed, almost without any decent fictional veil. More interesting, however, is the way in which its essence is seized upon to become on the one hand a situation, on the other a theme, both of which recur with obsessive constancy throughout Haggard's work.

The situation is that of a man caught between two women: Kallikrates between Amenaritis and Ayesha, or Leo Vincey between Ustane and Ayesha in *She*; Sir Henry Curtis between Nylephu and Sorais in *Allan Quatermain*. The opposite situation — two men and one woman — is rare. The theme is that of the enduring, indeed eternal nature of love. For Haggard love exists independently of those who experience it, a view which makes the idea of metempsychosis so important in the novels and such an inevitable constituent of their plots. Even Allan Quatermain turns out to have had several previous existences — as Shabaka, a handsome Egyptian hunter and noble, for example, in *The Ancient Allan*. As Ma-Mee, once Queen of Egypt tells Smith (in a previous incarnation Horu the sculptor) in "Smith and the Pharaohs", one of the stories in this collection: "True love endures immortal as the souls in which it was conceived, and from it for you and me, the night of woe and separation done, at the daybreak which draws on, there shall be born the splendour and the peace of union."

The Best Short Stories of Rider Haggard is a slightly odd title for a collection in which, out of twelve pieces, three are non-fiction articles, and two chapters from the novel *Wisdom's Daughter*. They are billed here as two tales which were later incorporated into the novel, but actually (according to the invaluable check list of Haggard's works included in Mr Higgins's biography) are two episodes from his serial publication.

However, the collection redeems itself with two good hunting yarns from Allan Quatermain: "That was the first and last time that I ever killed a brace of lions right and left". Total bag: five lions, one buffalo at a cost of two native servants. Also enjoyable are two stories of the Zulu War and the battle of Isandhlwana, and the editor has done us a service by printing "The Mahatma and the Hare", probably the most peculiar thing he ever wrote: a most un-Haggardian, almost Tolstoyan ferocious polemic against blood sports. "A strangely attractive book," Thomas Hardy called it. It is typical of Haggard that five years later he should begin *The Ivory Child* with an admiring account of a country house shooting match between Allan Quatermain and Van Koop, "a cur of the first water", in which between them they account for 353 pheasants, 27 hares, 6 pigeons, 4 partridges, 3 woodcock and a duck.

grants him. What we face is an argument which lacks historical sense.

Dr Sumner is convincing when she argues that Hardy used "abnormal psyches to subvert conventional ideas of human behaviour, that he was truly a 'problem' novelist. Her sense of the writer's dependence on his cultural circumstances vanishes, on the other hand, when psychologists come on the scene, and the un-historical, unscientific reverence shown for what remain hypotheses leaves the unfortunate impression that these later descriptions are being used to validate Hardy's characterization. Sumner fails to make it clear why it should interest us that Hardy's and Freud's descriptions are often close (does this, for instance, verify or show as redundant Freud's conceptual baggage?). That the whole notion of "psychology" remains historically ungrounded leaves a lacuna in the work which no amount of close reading can make up.

Bridehead revisited

By Lachlan Mackinnon

ROSEMARY SUMNER:

Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novels
216pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 29085 2

This book is a very puzzling concoction. Rosemary Sumner is concerned to show how Hardy's interest in the organization of individual psychologies, which she documents and analyses thoroughly, plays itself out in the fiction. She approaches her subject through the reading of individual characters, and on these she is very good. Her treatment of Sue Bridehead, for instance, is meditative and sympathetic, while her analysis of Michael Henchard as an aggressive, schizoid type is exemplary. Psychoanalytic critics are rarely so humane or so tactful.

However, while the book is good in its parts (despite the repetitive fitness of its prose), it is vitiated over all by the incoherence of its argument. Hardy was "ahead of his time", we are told, and Dr Sumner wants to show that he anticipated much later psychological work. For example, "Hardy's treatment of Henchard shows his understanding of many of the characteristics of aggressiveness; some of these were later discovered by Freud; others by Adler; others by psychologists and biologists writing in the second half of the twentieth century."

Freud was willing to concede that insights in literature had preceded his "discoveries", the very naming of the Oedipus complex is such an acknowledgement. How can it possibly make sense to say that Freud "discovered" what Hardy had earlier understood? Only if it is argued that Hardy was an entirely unanalytical, photographic recorder — but analytic powers are exactly what Dr Sumner

Patricia
Highsmith
THE
BLACK HOUSE

Victor
Canning
THE BOY ON
PLATFORM ONE

Richard
Gordon
DOCTORS'
DAUGHTERS
THE PRIVATE
LIFE OF DOCTOR
CRIPPEN

Janwillem
van de
Wetering
THE MIND
MURDERS

Anne
Melville
LORIMERS
IN LOVE

Spencer
Dunmore
ACE

Richard
Herley
THE
FLINT LORD

Nicolas
Freeling
ONE DAMN
THING AFTER
ANOTHER

Heinemann

The punditry of Mr Dooley

By Roy Foster

GRACE ECKLEY:
Finley Peter Dunne
173pp. Boston: Twayne.
0 8057 295 2

EDWARD J. BANDER:
The Literary life of a Chicago
Catholic
321pp. Charlottesville, Va: Mitche.
0 87215 329 0

"A subtick race is only funny when it's really subtick", remarked Finley Peter Dunne, through his mouthpiece Mr Dooley in 1907. "About three years ago I stopped laughing at Japanese jokes." The blend of cynicism and liberalism is characteristic: so is the oblique reference to current or recent events, in this case the Russo-Japanese war. But the Irish joke continues unpleasantly to flourish; and the American world Mr Dooley satirized - geriatric politicians, the power of monopoly finance, the manipulation of national icons and international attitudes - would not look very different today from its standpoints in the saloon bar on "th' Archway Road". This may be one reason why six books on Dunne and Dooley have appeared, or been announced, over the past year. Another explanation lies in the fact that Dunne's Irish-American pundit has maintained an onluring position in the national life; the likelihood is that most people who have taken final-year history in a good American high school have been exposed, often uncomprehendingly, to his "brogue" (though it is now possible to find a Chicago journalist who has never heard of him - unthinkable even a few years ago).

Like H. L. Mencken, Mr Dooley held the position of an abrasive sage, flaying his devotees for their small-mindedness, chauvinism and philistinism; and like Mencken he is not above the occasional expression of such qualities himself (the statement, for instance, that libraries encourage literature as a tombstone encourages life is considerably less clever than it sounds). Again like Mencken, Mr Dooley is not a familiar presence on this side of the Atlantic. Historians of America are an exception, particularly historians of the Spanish-American war; Denis Brogan made perceptive use of Dooley early on, emphasizing that he was not the plain people's oracle, as defined by authorities like Constance Rourke, but an oblique and subversive political commentator. Other exceptions are to be found among analysts of James Joyce, who had embraced Dooley's extraordinary locutions with predictable delight. Otherwise, he is an exotic taste, reflecting different apprehensions of humour. Mark

Twain declared that "the humorous story is American, the comic story is English, the witty story is French. The humorous story depends for its effect upon the manner of telling, the comic story and the witty story upon the matter". Mr Dooley, as usual, contributes a more pungent observation on the same point. "Hogan says th' difference between an American joke an' an English joke is th' place to laugh. In an American joke ye laugh just after th' point if at al, but in an English joke ye laugh anyther before th' point or after th' deacease in th' joker."

Forty-five years after the deacease of Finley Peter Dunne, it is unlikely that either of these books will induce a new audience to laugh at Mr Dooley. Professor Eckley is serious, painstaking in dating articles, and triumphant in tracking down a "triple entendre"; but her book suffers from its narrow compass, and even within its brief scope there is too much repetition of plun lines, too many inapt analogies with moderns like Mort Sahl. Moreover, too much of her own writing is ineluctable; she is herself capable of a fine neo-Dooleyism in describing the Jameson Raid as a "precipitous" rising, and references to "Orange men" and "the North Ireland question" imply a fundamental uncertainty about some of Dunne's recurring subjects. It is also debatable whether it is necessary to spend pages demolishing the idea that Dunne intended Dooley to be a limited and ignorant crackbarrel philosopher; to read any one of his monologues on the affairs of the day, in conjunction with what was being currently reported "in th' pa-pers" would soon put paid to that. Where Eckley's book is useful is in filling out the contemporary background and itemizing incidents upon which Dunne built his baroque invocations; but it too rapidly begins to read like a catalogue.

Nearly half Professor Bander's volume has no pretensions to read like anything else, being a chronological listing of Dunne's "Mr Dooley" essays, identified by brief quotations and comments, with date and place of publication appended. This is extremely useful to have when reading one of the numerous "Mr Dooley" collections published early this century, where the pieces carry no identification beyond a title, sometimes newly invented by the invisible editor. The rest of Bander's study comprises a good-tempered round-up of Dunne's views on various subjects. Mr Dooley being allowed to do most of the talking; the whole is as unpretentious as both of the eponymous subjects would have liked. Previous collections and commentaries by Barbara Schaff and Louis Filler remain important; Elmer Ellis's 1969 biography is still defini-

tive; the political overtones and influence of Dunne's satire have recently been explored by William Gibson in a detail unattested by Eckley and irrelevant to Bander. Their books add to a growing, if minor, industry.

Questions will continue to arise, however, regarding Mr Dooley's longevity - how important was he? how relevant? how funny? The technique deserves examination - not only the atrocious "brogue", which Dunne knew perfectly well approximated to no Irish accent extant, though he called it "Roscommon". (Why, heaven only knew; his own father came from Leix and his mother from Kilkenny.) This conferred uniqueness, if not verisimilitude. Another carefully calculated trick was the supporting cast: Hennessy ("Hinnissy", as Joyce correctly preserved him) is the eternal foil and stooge, directly compared by Dooley himself, in a scathing commentary on Conan Doyle, to Sherlock Holmes's sidekick ("Pass th'lope, Watson"). And Hogan, who never makes a corporal manifestation, serves as the constant reference point for classical and literary allusions ("As Hogan says..."). A trick also used to bravura effect by P.G. Wodehouse. Tags and quotations are epigrammatically transmuted ("It's what Father Kelly calls a case of mayhem et chew'em. That's Latin, Hinnissy; an' it manes what's wan man's food is another man's pizen"). Proper names are conjured into catch-phrases; the celebrated and pompous are translated into intimates of the lofty bar-tender (as Admiral Dewey became, immortally, "me Cousin George"). Parodic imaginings occasionally extend into lunatic fantasies, where St Patrick's Day is celebrated on the Twelfth of July, or suffragettes invade the Capitol. But the length and tone of a Dooley piece are always adroitly calculated; when Dooley (or Dunne) becomes embarrassingly serious or sentimental, an oblique enquiry from Hennessy calls him back into line. This formula rarely becomes tedious; significantly, when Dunne essayed other forms, and when he wrote "seriously", the alchemy never worked. Mr Dooley was good to him; the poor Chicago journalist became the rich friend of presidents, and Dunne's private life had far more in common with the bar on the Archway Road. Appropriately enough, he came to be imprisoned by the success of his creation.

It is apposite, too, that Dunne's own career illustrated the American Dream, for Mr Dooley has far more to do with American politics than with Irish consciousness. The patois and the names of his habits may be apparently Irish; there are occasional essays on the Irish question; but even when the English are mocked, it is



"Spring is here, a-sih-puh-ring is here, Life is skittles and life is beer... All the world seems in tune on a spring afternoon. When we're poisoning pigeons in the park." Ronald Searle's scuffed version of what is perhaps Tom Lehrer's most famous song of innocence and infamy is one of half a dozen of his drawings in Too Many Songs by Tom Lehrer with not enough drawings by Ronald Searle, which has just been published (144pp. Eyre Methuen. £9.95. 0 413 48570 6). It contains both words and music of the brilliant series of songs that, as Lehrer says, he wrote "between World Wars II and III".

from an American rather than an Irish-American standpoint. Dunne's own identification with Ireland was self-confessedly tepid. He made fun of the Clan-na-Gael and John Devoy, and Irish-American zealots returned the dislike; resentment of Dunne's use of dialect probably counted for less than Dooley's mockery of nationalist crusades. His really beloved subjects were Theodore Roosevelt, John D. Rockefeller ("a kind iv a society fr th' prevention of willow to money"), and most of all William Jennings Bryan - preserved for posterity in Mr Dooley's half-affectionate, half-contemptuous apostrophes as vividly as in Mencken's famous obituary. It is this turn-of-the-century all-American cast that Dunne, through Dooley, immortalized; it was his cynical lampooning of their causes that carried across the Union.

Nor, obviously, did it stop there. But neither the most often mentioned in connection with him - Artemus Ward and Will Rogers - nor his

aspiring successors - columnists like Mort Sahl and Art Buchwald - ever hit the same vein. Even where he influenced later satirists, the idiom was missing, as well as the unerring eye for a surreal construction. This particular talent may have descended to another form of comic genius: in one of Dooley's courtroom fantasies, the jury's three questions ("Did Looterg look as though he'd kill his wife? Did his wife look as though she ought to be kilt? Isn't it time we wint to supper?") are pure Groucho Marx. So are lines like "Wanst a German, Bryan - preserved for posterity in Mr Dooley's half-affectionate, half-contemptuous apostrophes as vividly as in Mencken's famous obituary. It is this turn-of-the-century all-American cast that Dunne, through Dooley, immortalized; it was his cynical lampooning of their causes that carried across the Union."

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From the visible to the hypothetical

By Stuart Sutherland

RICHARD L. GREGORY:
Mind in Science
A History of Explanation in Psychology
and Physics
641pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£18.50.
0 297 77825 0

Richard Gregory is a man of many parts - psychologist, inventor, philosopher, historian and punster. There have been few recent books that can rival *Mind in Science* either in its scope or in its engaging enthusiasm. It provides a history of the physical sciences, of philosophy excluding only ethics, of technology, and of psychology. Within this historical context, Gregory tries to illuminate the nature of mind both through the way it is reflected in man's changing view of the nature of the universe and by applying the latest scientific discoveries to the mind itself.

His theme is not always easy to follow, partly because he cannot resist a good story or a picturesque digression. For example, he interrupts an interesting account of how new properties may emerge from machines to tell us that "one hundred brassiere straps on a laboratory order form, and coated [them] with luminous paint to provide lines of adjustable length, for a visual experiment", and he takes as much delight in Pythagoras's abstinence from beans as in his celebrated theorem. Although he believes that "puns are critically important phenomena, whose neural correlates should be investigated", he confines his own proclivities as a punster to writing a "Pretext" instead of a Preface and to remarking in a discussion of mechanics that the crank and the eccentric are both "delightfully psychological".

One of the more interesting of the many themes running through the book is the importance of current technology in suggesting models of natural phenomena. Gregory argues that it was because the only inanimate force used in Greek technology was a weight on the end of a rope that Aristotle thought animistically about all motion, and suggested that each substance sought out its natural place in the universe. In fact the Greeks also used the pressure of steam to open, on the insertion of an obol, the doors to shrines of the Gods, but the argument stands. Gregory points out that many methods of measurement were developed not for scientific purposes, but in order to ensure fairness in the barter of goods, and he suggests that the attempt to produce bearings as free from friction as possible paved the way for Newton to postulate that bodies continue in uniform motion unless a force is applied. Harvey would probably not have discovered the function of the heart had it not

been for the technological invention of the pump. The existence of mechanical gadgets using negative feedback to maintain a state of equilibrium, such as the governor on a steam engine, has recently suggested new insights into goal-seeking behaviour, and with the invention of the computer we at last have a technological device that may provide a model for human intelligence.

There are many occasions throughout the book on which Gregory re-moves a puzzle by the application of common sense or an illuminating analogy. It is no use looking at the individual parts of a watch to decide which of them is responsible for telling the time, since it is their interaction that is important. Similarly it is meaningless to ask which part of a bicycle wheel gives it the property of rolling over a smooth surface. If the wheel is broken in half, neither half has this property, but when the two halves are put together a new interface with the environment is created. Gregory expresses surprise that people should resist mechanistic accounts of the mind, given that all machines have a function and can be evaluated by how well they execute it. But here he surely misses the main reason for the objection, which is that the behaviour of machines is fully determined and to treat people as machines appears to conflict with our concept of free will. Freedom of the will is one of the few philosophical issues on which he does not touch.

Although many of Gregory's ideas are not new, they are for the most part well put. Thus, he adopts a sensible solution to the problem of why deduction should apparently supply new knowledge, even though the knowledge is implicit in the premises and the axioms. He argues that because our intelligence is limited a chain of deductions can lead to a conclusion that is surprising and that since the structure of a given branch of mathematics may reflect the structure of aspects of the world, mathematical deduction may reveal new empirical truths.

Gregory is so good-natured that he is anxious to deny the existence of genetically determined differences between the sexes or between different races. He argues with some force that social interaction is so complex that one cannot know what traits would have had survival value in prehistoric times and hence one cannot infer the differential selection of the genes governing these traits, but he does not consider the detailed arguments of the sociobiologists. In our hominid ancestors a woman could only bear a handful of children in a lifetime and was presumably dependent on her mate for providing protection and food, whereas a man could inseminate without cost large numbers of women. It is, therefore, plausible to suggest that men have acquired a genetic predisposition to

be more promiscuous than women, even though it cannot be proved. Moreover, direct support for the genetic determination of a trait can be provided by investigating the physiological factors underlying it, though little evidence of this sort is at present available, except possibly for the role of testosterone in determining aggression.

In considering intelligence tests, Gregory draws an interesting distinction between potential and kinetic intelligence. Potential intelligence is knowledge that can be applied to the solution of a problem and might even include a knowledge of what rules of inference to apply to a particular problem. Kinetic intelligence is the ability to create a novel solution to a problem, as, for example, by seeing an analogy between that problem and another one that can already be manipulated by potential intelligence. IQ tests claim to measure kinetic intelligence, but it is impossible to separate its contribution from that of potential intelligence, which will be affected by upbringing and is therefore likely to vary between the sexes and between races. There is no way in which a correction can be made for the contribution of potential intelligence without circularity. One example of such circularity is the deliberate equalizing of the average IQ scores of men and women by giving a mixture of verbal tests, on which women on average score more highly, and spatial tests, on which men tend to do better. Gregory's arguments are interesting, but they stray a long way from the evidence. Despite the attempt to equate the average IQ of the sexes, there is more variation in the IQ of men; more men have very high and very low IQs than do women. Moreover, his dismissal of the inheritance of kinetic intelligence as a meaningless question conflicts with evidence from adopted children whose IQ scores correspond more closely to those of their biological parents than to those of their adoptive parents.

So far I have dealt only with some of Gregory's tangential themes. His central thesis is that both perception and science work by the formation of hypotheses. In vision, the mind unconsciously infers from the fragmentary two-dimensional light patterns present on the retina a representation of the environment. That this representation is a hypothesis and subject to error is established by the

presence of visual illusions. Such illusions are more common in the laboratory than in real life, though, as Gregory points out, some observations have detected a hissing sound when the sun sinks into the sea and Artemidorus reported that the setting sun was a hundred times its normal size.

The inferences that underlie everyday perceptions are of great complexity and they depend on the application of unconscious assumptions. If a two-dimensional picture of an object being rotated is presented on a television screen, the brain infers its exact three-dimensional shape, but underlying this inference is the assumption that in the absence of contrary evidence bodies are rigid: the same retinal pattern could be produced by an infinity of non-rigid objects, but only by a rigid object of one specific three-dimensional shape. A line in the retinal image can be interpreted in many different ways - it may be a convex or concave edge at which two surfaces join, it may be formed by two separate but coplanar surfaces joining one another, it may represent the edge of a body with another body lying behind it, or it may be a change in the reflection of a surface: exactly how a line is interpreted depends on the unconscious application of vast stores of knowledge. The reason why we accept as

veridical the hypothetical representation of the world constructed in perception is that it accurately predicts further information received through the senses. The sight of a table top predicts both the noise made if we rap it with our knuckles and the feeling of pressure on the knuckles themselves. Gregory is surely wrong in stating that perceptions are not explanatory. Just as, by analogy with conscious inference, psychologists talk of unconscious inferences in perception, so one could argue that the construction of a perceptual representation of the external world explains the sensations we receive as we move around.

Gregory admits that "There is, unfortunately, no general agreement as to just what hypotheses are, or what characterizes them. This, it must be confessed, is a weakness in our position". He holds that hypotheses "have predictive power, and that they can be suggested by observation and induction, and can be confirmed or refuted, though not in either case with logical necessity". To reach this conclusion, he struggles both with Hume's doubts on the validity of

induction and with Popper's thesis that though hypotheses can be refuted by observation they can never be confirmed and that generalizations cannot be established by repeated observations.

Gregory seems to accept Hume's view that induction cannot be logically justified. It is no use claiming that induction has worked in the past since the inference that it will continue to work in the future is itself an induction. If, however, one makes the minimal assumption that there is some order in the universe, it becomes open to us to discover that order, though we always run the risk of being wrong. That is in the nature both of perception and of scientific hypotheses.

Gregory's lengthy attack on Popper's views on the nature of scientific hypotheses and induction appears to be based on a misunderstanding. Popper does not believe, as Gregory alleges, that no new predictions could be drawn from a scientific hypothesis. Indeed Popper argues that the more predictions that can be drawn and the more precise the predictions, the better the theory, since it makes it easier to refute. Gregory's argument that scientists use Mill's canons to establish the cause of an event by taking observations in varied circumstances is beside the point. Popper argues that no observation can be made until one has a theory or theories to test. Any event is preceded by an indefinite number of other events, and unless one makes a hypothesis about which of these preceding events might be the cause it is quite impossible to know what observations to make or know how to vary the antecedent circumstances to eliminate some of the possible hypothetical causes. Moreover, Popper is, pace Gregory, fully aware that a single observation does not necessarily refute a theory. It is always open to us to doubt the observation or to modify some of the assumptions used in drawing the prediction whilst retaining the main theory. Popper is careful to distinguish between methodological refutation and logical refutation. The truth of an observational statement denying a prediction drawn from a theory is sufficient to refute the theory, but the observation itself is not. Gregory's attack on Popper is all the more strange since many of Popper's views are similar to his own. Gregory would surely agree that both in science and perception no hypothesis can be known to be correct.

Information, please

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Ruby Dylon, née Ruby Lindsay (worked as Ruby Lind) (1887-1919): artist and illustrator of children's books. Wife of Will Dylon, of the *Daily Herald*, resident in London 1909-1919, and believed active in feminist affairs, with the Fabians. Information sought about her activities, and those of her associates, during the period when she lived in London.

Caroline, College of Advanced Education, PO Box 1, Belmont, Victoria, Australia 2515.

Eleonor Farjeon (1881-1965): any personal recollections, letters, etc; for a biography. Anne Harvey, Annabel Farjeon, 37 St Stephen's Road, Ealing, W13 8JJ.

Ma J. Fitt (1897-1959): writer or detective fiction; pseudonym of Dr Kathleen Freeman, formerly of Larika Rise, St Mellons, nr Cardiff. Information is sought about any unpublished letters or newspaper articles; personal recollections particularly welcome; for a biography. W. D. A. Rowlands, "Trefelin", Heol-y-Ragol, St Brides-Major, Mid-Glamorgan.

Stefano and Agostino Gatti: any information about their management of the Adelphi Theatre, London, between 1879 and 1900, particularly accounts or personal papers, or of the present whereabouts of any descendants; for a study of the Adelphi during this period. Deirdre Cantlin, c/o Department of Drama, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL.

Etienne Gilson (1884-1978), French philosopher: any information on items by or about him not cited in standard sources; for a bibliography. Margaret McGrath, Department, Kelly Library, St Michael's College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1H4.

Captain Sheffield Grace: any information on the present whereabouts of the MS of *The New Zealand Diaries of Captain Sheffield Grace, 63th Light Infantry (1864-66)*. Alan Klottrup, 37 Oakland Avenue, Hartlepool, Cleveland TS25 5LD.

George Burton Haygarth: information on his life for research purposes. Dr Haygarth received his medical degree from Glasgow University in 1841, lived in Tasmania until 1845, was guardian at the prison colony in Sydney, and arrived in Chile in 1849. He lived and worked in Bolivia from c 1851 to 1877. Olivia Harris, Department of Anthropology, Goldsmiths' College, New Cross, London SE14 6NW.

Susan Homer (171830-17900): traveller and writer on Italy; information on her family, her dates of birth and death, her contacts in Italy; for an edition of her MS diary at Florence. Mark Roberts, British Institute of Florence, Lungarno, Guicciardini 9, 50125 Firenze, Italy.

Huguenot source material: letters, diaries, memoirs and any other published or unpublished first-hand sources conveying what it was like to be a Huguenot immigrant to, or a descendant of Huguenot extraction living in, the British Isles, 1550-1850, other than material in the Huguenot Society Library, University College, London; for a study. John F. C. Phillips, 92 Rossiter Road, London SW12 9RX.

William Holman Hunt (1827-1910): whereabouts of his paintings and drawings, and of manuscript material written by or addressed to the artist; for the catalogue raisonné of his works to be published by Yale University Press. Judith Bronkhorst, Courtauld Institute of Art, 20 Portman Square, London W1.

Montague Rhodes James (1862-1936): for a forthcoming article I would appreciate hearing from anyone with personal or professional experience of James during his years at King's College, Cambridge, or Eton. Letters and other memorabilia are of particular interest. Any assistance will be duly acknowledged and credited. Linda Smith, 33 Worcester St, Boston, Massachusetts 02118.

Eric Kennington, RA (1880-1960): any personal reminiscences and information; any letters loaned will be carefully looked after; for a possible future memoir. Elisabeth Kennington, Eden Cottage, Mays Green, Harpsden, Henley, Oxon RG9 4AJ.

W. H. James Weale (1832-1917) and his father: personal recollections, for a bibliographical study. Lori Van Biervliet, Sint-Annelei 11, 8000 Brugge, Belgium.

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TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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TLS

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

THE WORLD'S FOREMOST LITERARY WEEKLY

remainders

BY ERIC KORN

A milestone in the rare-book caper was *New Paths in Book-Collecting* (1934), a collection of essays edited by John Carter which might without too much impropriety be subtitled "new ways of getting the Johns to spend their money on previously unsellable old fat". Seeing that the number of customers who could be made happy and poor was limited by the number of Shakespeare Quartos, Kelmscotts and Aldines available, Carter quite properly drew attention to the possibility of collecting detective stories, yellow books, the history of science, almanacks and so forth.

Creative collectors today still try to discover or invent areas where impressive coverage can be bought cheaply, (second editions of Tachinides' municipal bus timetables); creative dealers try to get there ahead of them. In consequence it's increasingly difficult to find paths that aren't already signposted, metalled, and carrying heavy traffic. So this year's Carter memorial award for innovative cataloguing must go to Peter Bell and Christopher Johnson's *British Biography 1800-1920* for presenting an undoubted contribution to scholarship with a degree of commercial shrewdness.

The subjects would populate a small town (1,200 just from A-G). They are folks who were alive at some time in the nineteenth century (Mary Wollstonecraft has been slipped in as a desirable alien) and who were written about before 1920. So that as well as being a compendium of sources, it is also a record of the range and character of the Victorian-Edwardian biographic mode, from Sir Henry Bessemer, steel manufacturer, to Davidson, lunatic; and from Sir William Henry Flower, late director of the Natural History Museum to Cook, Annie Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Cook, travel agent, gassed in bath.

In fact it is probably more use in general than in particular, because a researcher who wants data on (say) John Briggs, late editor of the *Westmorland Gazette*, probably already has the memoir published in Kirkby Lonsdale in 1825, and if he is researching on some other editor of the *Westmorland Gazette* he may look here in vain: whereas an Institute of Biographical Studies would be well advised to buy the whole lot and let the statisticians loose on it. My own crude statistics suggest that the topics are 40 per cent religious, 10 per cent each political, judicial, scholarly, military, and artistic, 4½ per cent sporting, 4½ educational, with the odd one in a hundred like "stammerer", "English Lady married to Sheriff of Wexham", and "keeper of asylum for fallen women and gypsies".

The beauty of all this is that though many of the books are individually rare (10-15 per cent not in the British Library), such rarities are collectively not uncommon. And while the average price of the books - about £20, with many in single figures, and nothing over £50 - is trifling compared to most antiquarian catalogues (and about the price of a newly published biographic title), they must have been quite a lot cheaper when found by ones and twos in the obscure but haunted shelves of deep provincial bookstores. But just as putting together several thousand Lives of not very interesting people creates a mass-biography of great fascination, so putting together a lot of not very valuable books collectively creates a context of value. And that's creative book-selling.

I've been reading *A Life of Oscar Wilde (and his Mother)* by Anna de Brémont, who has theories that wouldn't be gone a bundle on by the more ardent feminists. She reckons that successful women are successful because they have "a masculine soul in a feminine brain-building" and this goes for all heroic women back to "Mother Eve herself, braving the tempter and courageously shielding the father of our race from the vengeance of the

Almighty", which isn't the way I remember it. Oscar Wilde, of course, was a feminine soul in a masculine brain-building, which accounts for all his troubles.

And Oscar Wilde's mother (a great soul too) reversing the normal rules of psychoanalytic causality (and no bad thing either), knew instinctively that her child was a feminine soul even before it was born, so naturally she wished he had been born a girl, and often told him so.

Another man who lays a lot of stress on trifling gender differences is Fabius Zachary Snoop, author of *From the Monotremes to the Madonnas: A Study of the Breast in Culture and Religion* (John Bale and Danielson, 1928). This is little more than an anthology of mammary references from "let me to thy bosom fly" to "Ravished in that fair Via Lactea", with droll commentary. The content, which I will not describe as anything other than tickling prurience, is unmemorable, but the author's name deserves to be recorded. If it is a pseudonym the usual sources don't know it, though the initials FZS seem facetious. Anna, Comtesse de Brémont, by the way, isn't a pseudonym either: she was the author of *Lady Lilian's Luck*, a *Romance of Ostend, Daughters of Pleasure*, *Coronation Sonnets to her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Mary*, and *A Son of Africa*, later retitled *Was it a Sin?* and bound up with *The Metamorphosis of Helen* by Winifred Bogg.

But one unlikely name that is indeed pseudonymous is Gervée Baronte, who belongs in the Reviewer's Hall of Fame for her remark - of *Mein Kampf* - that "it lacks tact, but is filled with Hitler's astounding vitality and fascination". This is to be found in *You Have Lived Before* (1936), a handbook to reincarnation (Greta Garbo was a Florentine nun, Amy Mollison was a friend of Marco Polo, Cleopatra is now living in New York and seventy years old). It's a relief to learn that Ms Baronte can find no evidence that Mussolini was either Augustus or Napoleon; particularly because Napoleon is someone else altogether, a young Russian lad, the son of an OGPU officer and an intourist guide, born in 1921, who will become a world ruler by 1946. Miss Gervée Baronte, as I said, is a pseudonym. Her real name was Miss Gervée Baronti, though she later became (and serve her right) Mrs Breckinridge, and more briefly, Arthur Miles, for the purposes of her Indian travel-book, *The Land of the Lingam (with Plates)*.

Now for a bit of English pastoral.

On a pleasant July day in 193-, Geoffrey Pollett, a New Zealander of small fame but great energy, set off from Horsham in S-shire ("S-x" would be more precise, but misleading) with a rucksack full of his own poetry in broadsheet (St Dominic's Press) and a pedlar's licence from the local constabulary. For the rest of the summer he tramped the English countryside, hawking his rhymesheets - sixpence a time or thruppence for typescript - at the doors of the obscure and the then famous, from Belloc at Shipley Mill to Chesterton in the Chilterns, by way of Laurence: Housman in Somerset ("You aren't confusing me with my brothers, are you?") Winifred Holtby (Devon) and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (Cornwall); by way of Ethel M. Dell and Margaret Woods, through Beatrice Chase, Rutland, Five hundred miles later he had earned and spent nine pounds in all and acquired, as well as blisters and a tan and a verse-sheet autographed by all his eminent clients (whose is it now?), the material for a waywardly pleasing memoir, *Song for 6d* (Longmans, 1936; woodcuts by Florence Green). The book - like his poetry - is decent but a little too cheerful and disorder.

No one seems to have been vile to him, though various anonymous gentlefolks or their servants were abrupt. Clergy and squires were the worst, but usually cold ("We shan't be needing any today, thank you"), rather than abusive: one man who shouted at him got a stiff little note of protest the next day. E. M. Delafield sent the curious message that she was "no good at that sort of thing"; A. G. Street declined to help on the grounds that he was just a farmer ("Reckon his books must be better than his farming", said a sceptical neighbour); but most professionals seem at least to have offered him nourishment - a good many tankards of foaming ale get poured into him by successful literary gents. Quite a few patronized his wares; and him as well, often: "I'm taking a sporting chance on your success," said Sir Henry Newbolt, handing him what is said to have been "generous" and I estimate was five shillings. He steered clear of the avant-garde. The nearest thing to a modern he encounters is Roy Campbell's mother-in-law, though "Q", perhaps unexpectedly, is reading Ezra Pound when he calls.

Newbolt must have lost his half-crowns, for Pollett doesn't seem to have published anything else. But it's pleasing to imagine what all that fresh air and exercise might do for X or Y or Z, the well-loved poets of the present day. Of course most writers don't now live in houses with names in photogenic parts of the country, with domestics to bring the tea-things out. Nor, generally, do motorists accost walkers with the words "I hope you won't be offended if I offer you a lift". And your clients would assume that you were being followed by the cameras of *The South Bank Show*, and they'd probably be right.

I've a soft spot, especially this year, for curmudgeons who cry down public rejoicings, but can't wholly approve of one Colonel Sibbald, who feared that the 1851 Great Exhibition would start "a new influx of Papists, bringing with them idolatry, schism, hubbub, plague and venereal disease". He's quoted, without enthusiasm, by Alfred Heller, editor of *World's Fair*, a sixteen-page quarterly from Northern California with the terrifying subscription price of \$24 annually, a periodical single-mindedly devoted to international exhibitions past and future.

Heller apparently sees fair as a metaphor for a leisurely, high-tech pluralist future, where bright-apparelled folk of many lands saunter through pleasure domes and multimedia entertainment, or float on scented waterways, rather more like one of Ray Bradbury's folksy fantasies than a high-minded Wellsian Utopia. Not surprisingly, Bradbury is a great booster for Disneyland, and presumably more so for Disney's last dream, EPCOT, not an Essex housing estate but the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, now under construction in Florida, "a living blue print for the future" and a showcase for the ingenuity and imagination of American Free Enterprise. It will also be a sort of bar-parade for the hired help, described as "tomorrow's leaders living together in a continuous people-to-people exchange".

It would be a pity to miss a bright new hope for mankind for only £1.50 including postage and packing, bringing you this powerful argument for self-knowledge from a Scientific hand-out. "It is now widely accepted," they say, "that our lives are affected in some way by the mind. The full extent of this influence is not so widely known. It has been estimated," they add, "that up to 70 per cent of all illnesses may be psychosomatic. (Caused by the mind.) That fact alone," they conclude, "would make the mind worth taking a long hard look at." Why don't we all go and do just that?

JOHN RUSKIN:
The Stones of Venice
Abridged and edited by Jan Morris
239pp. Faber. £12.50.
0 571 11815 1

JEANNE CLEGG:
Ruskin and Venice
233pp. Junction Books. £12.50.
0 86245 019 5

What a fortunate coincidence that these books have been published so close together, for in reading *The Stones of Venice* one longs to know more about Ruskin in Venice, and reading *Ruskin and Venice* one cannot wait to read *The Stones*. Brought up to exorcise Ruskin for having, supposedly, done so much harm to English architecture, I did not read a word of his until I was over fifty. So ignorant of him was I that when I went to Venice in 1946 with instructions not to miss the tomb of the Doge Andrea Vendramin in the church of SS Giovanni e Paolo, which Ruskin had pronounced a perfect example of the true spirit of the Renaissance, I gazed at it unable to understand what was so special about it. It was not until I read J. G. Links's 1960 abridgement of *The Stones*, my first introduction to Ruskin, that I learnt that the Renaissance to Ruskin was a "pestilential art" and that Vendramin's tomb was the epitome of its baseness in that only the visible side of the Doge's figure was carved, whereas in the earlier Gothic tomb of the Doge Tommaso Mocenigo next to it, the hidden side, the side God sees, was as carefully sculpted as the visible side. Both these tombs are illustrated in Jan Morris's abridgement of the 450,000-word original.

This is a lovely book to handle, beautifully produced, with twenty-five colour plates, old and new photographs and innumerable drawings. Miss Morris's introduction is written with her usual magic. I can think of no other author whose prose would not seem dim after Ruskin's. When commenting on that glorious chapter, "The Nature of Gothic", she writes of the Gothic style:

It could tolerate mistakes, roughness, asymmetries, because it was derived strictly from nature, which detested a straight line as it abhorred a vacuum. It had no sense of the servile perfection of the new classical. It was ornamented not with urns, but with fauna and flora. It was an architecture rude and wild, tinged with humour, joyful, spontaneous, strong, and never afraid of superfluity. ... *The Stones of Venice* is itself a paradigm of its vision - a mighty Gothic structure itself, obeying Ruskin's own rules with scrupulous splendour. For it too is, as he would say, rude and wild of character - a soaring, profuse, tangled book, whose shape must be worried out from the spectacular richness of it all. It too scorns symmetry and unnecessary perfections.

Jan Morris mints a useful new noun in the word "muffle" which she uses to describe the empires of Europe in 1848 as "lying like great upholstered muffles across the body of Europe". Jeanne Clegg's book has a muffle of scholarship over it - thirty-three pages of source notes, for instance, to 193 of text (how helpful it would be if authors would key their notes to page numbers as well as to chapters), but it will be invaluable to all Venice-lovers and invaluable to anyone interested in Ruskin. It starts with an admirable survey of "The English View of Venice before Ruskin", then covers his eleven visits there in separate sections. One might expect more illustrations for the price, but those that there are, are extremely well chosen. They include a most fascinating odd photograph of a particularly interesting drawing of the church of San Girolamo, turned into a steam flour mill in 1842 and shown with black smoke pouring from its bel-

The joys of superfluity

By Mary Lutyens

frey-chimney - the first sight to greet the traveller arriving in Venice, as described by Ruskin at the end of the first volume of *The Stones*.

Ruskin was sixteen when he first went to Venice with his parents in the autumn of 1835, and he fell in love with it, recalling the visit in *Præterita* as one of "pure childish passion of pleasure". They stayed only a fortnight but he promised his diary "to make such a drawing of the Ducal Palace as never had been made before". When he was there for the second time, for a month in May 1841, again with his parents, he was in melancholy mood after an unhappy love affair which had so affected his health that he had been obliged to take time off from Oxford. Nevertheless, on his first night he was writing in his diary, "Thank God I am here! It is the Paradise of cities... I am happier than I have been these five years - so happy - happier than in all probability I ever shall be again".

When he returned to Venice four years later it was for the purpose of writing the second volume of *Modern Painters*, and he went alone this time with his servant George Hobbs. He had not reckoned with the changes he was to find in the city. The railway bridge across the lagoon, near completion, blocked the view of Venice from Mestre; there were gas lamps on both sides of the Grand Canal and in the Piazzas, and other "fearful changes" as well as destruction of buildings going on everywhere. "They are scraping St Mark's clean", he wrote to his father. "Off go all the glorious old weather stains, the rich hues of marble which nature, mighty as she is, has taken ten centuries to bestow". Fortunately he never knew of plans proposed the following year to extend the Riva degli Schiavoni seventy metres outwards to allow for the building of "a gigantic complex of hotel, theatre, cafés, baths and other facilities", to continue the railway to San Giorgio Maggiore and to throw a bridge across to the Piazzetta. It was during this visit that Ruskin "discovered" Tintoretto, whose greatness "crushed" him. In May the following year he was there again - for the last time with his parents.

Revolution in Europe prevented Ruskin from taking his wife Effie to Venice directly after their marriage in April 1848 as had been his intention, but soon after the Venetians capitulated to the Austrians in August 1849, they set out, arriving in the middle of November to spend eight months at the Danelli Hotel where Ruskin had always stayed before. (Jan Morris is mistaken, by the way, in saying that the railway bridge had been repaired after the Austrian bombardment by the time they arrived. It was because the train from Mestre was not running that they came after their arrival one of the carriages of a visiting German prince and his wife tumbled into the lagoon and was submerged for five hours. Seeing it drying out on the quay afterwards was a "melancholy sight" to Effie.) Having already turned his attention from painting to architecture (*The Seven Lamps of Architecture* had been published earlier in 1849), Ruskin was bent on preserving in prose, drawings and daguerreotypes all he could of the stones of Venice before they crumbled away. He spent his days copying, measuring, making endless notes, lying full length on the marble floor of St Mark's or balanced on the tops of ladders examining sculptural details.

Jeanne Clegg gives a masterly analysis of *The Stones*, pointing out all Ruskin's inconsistencies and contradictions. He cared no more for consistency than for symmetry, writing endearingly, "I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly until I have contradicted myself at least three times".

During the two long sojourns in Venice with Effie, Ruskin appears for the most part in Jeanne Clegg's pages as art critic, theorist and stern

moralist. He would not have dared tell his parents that he was enjoying himself. They bewailed his long absences and only countenanced them on the understanding that he was working diligently on his book, eschewing all frivolity. While fulminating against the filth and vice of the Venetians, the appalling destruction of the buildings and the vacuous boredom of society, he was in truth very happy. Effie suited him, for she found her own amusements and left him in peace to follow his own pursuits. If it had not been for her he might never have met Rawdon Brown who was to help him so much with his Venetian work: Brown was her friend, captivated by her. Jeanne Clegg does not show us these little glimpses of Ruskin at play as seen in Effie's letters home. They had "famous fun and laughter" over their morning ball games to keep warm in the hotel; we see Ruskin "jumping with delight and executing *pas* (that Taglioni [the ballet dancer living in Venice] would have stared her widest at)", catching crabs at the Lido, together with Effie's Austrian adorer Lieutenant Paulizza whom Ruskin admired for his beautiful drawings, and racing them along the sands, and "setting large empty shells to sail on the sea"; and at a champagne picnic at Torcello, again with Paulizza: "Nothing could be merrier than the two men. After dinner, to show that the champagne had not gone to their heads, they ran races round the old buildings and so fast that one could hardly see them". And in 1852, during their second visit, they hired dominoes and masks and went "masking" in the streets while the Carnival was on. Effie laughed so much that she could "scarcely go on" while Ruskin "who was as grave as possible, did the thing capably".

Among much new material quoted by Jeanne Clegg are some fascinating letters from John James Ruskin to his son during this second visit. Mr Ruskin had not approved of the first volume of *The Stones*, except for the first and last chapters, nor had the publisher. It had appeared in 1851 and was selling badly. "... No technical works are popular or sell", Mr Ruskin wrote. "... *Modern Painters* is the selling book. I can see one of the public quite comprehend this - Your powers of writing are so fine that we grudge to have them cabined, cribbed, confined - We want you, pen in hand not Trowell". (Jan Morris evidently agrees with Mr Ruskin for she has omitted most of the first volume, a lovable do-it-yourself building treatise.) Mr Ruskin hoped that the second volume would make up for the first. His son had a marvellous ability to "draw sermons out of stones". With the addition of "some Turner gleams of Venice to be given to your word painting - It will give a book indeed". It is to Mr Ruskin, then, that we owe the "Turner gleam" in those marvellous word paintings of the first approach to Venice and the first sight of St Mark's.

Ruskin did not return to Venice again until 1869. His marriage had been annulled in 1854 and ten years later his father had died. He was now besotted with a young girl, Rose La Touche. He stayed at Verona but visited Venice four times for a few days at a time. It was only now that he became aware of Carpaccio, who came to mean so much to him; he wrote to Burne-Jones, "There's nothing like Carpaccio. ... I don't give up a new world to me". He had not found Venice so beautiful since he was a boy. He was at Verona still when he heard that he had been offered the Slade Professorship at Oxford.

The following spring he was in Venice again for a month, principally in order to show the city to his cousin, Joan Agnew, and to some old friends. And he was there again for three weeks in the summer of 1872 at a time when he was desperately unhappy. Rose was very ill and her parents had forbidden them

to meet or correspond. In January 1871 he had started writing his monthly pamphlets *Fora Clavigera: Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain* and in June was writing Letter 19 from Venice complaining that he could not write that "morning because of the accursed whistling of the daily steam engine of the omnibus for the Lido". This passage was sent by a reader from Wales to an Italian paper and caused much resentment amongst the Venetians.

When Ruskin was again in Venice for his long penultimate visit of eight months in 1876-77, Rose and his mother were both dead and he was desperately lonely. With nobody really to love or to love him he looked for and found signs from Rose, whom he had associated with St Ursula in Carpaccio's picture of the saint lying in bed dreaming. These signs and symbols brought him to a mad ecstasy followed by depression. He stayed during this visit in two cheap rooms on the Zattere, now the Pensione Calcina, where he was able to chop wood for his fire on the quay. The Calcina is the only place in Venice which bears a commemorative plaque to him. The Danelli, where he had stayed on all his previous visits, except the second with Effie, has failed to put one up, although there is a plaque to George Sand and Alfred de Musset in room No 10.

While he was at the Calcina Ruskin wrote a didactic *Guide to the Principal Pictures in the Academy of Fine Arts at Venice* in which he made the sensible suggestion that visitors should be charged a fee before entering the city. He also wrote *St Mark's Rest: The History of Venice Written for the Help of the Few Travellers Who Still Care for her*

Monuments. Jeanne Clegg expertly dissects this book, as well as the *Guide*; she calls it "as pilgrim's guide to Venice, to the tombs of her good men, the images of her saints, her 'relics and old bones'".

As of everything, Ruskin had his own eccentric view of history. He had advised his Oxford students that "in the reading of history your first purpose must be to seek what is to be praised, and disdain all the rest; and in doing so, remember after that the most important part of the history of man is that of his imagination. What he actually does is always in great part accidental".

In this section Jeanne Clegg has drawn upon thirty-six hitherto unpublished letters from Ruskin to Rawdon Brown and gives an interesting account of Ruskin's young Italian disciples. The section ends with a harrowing letter, likewise unpublished, from Ruskin to one of them, Count Zorzi, written in January 1879, less than a year after his first complete mental breakdown: "I have not abandoned you - but my brains have abandoned me. Have you not been told that I was raving mad for two months? - held down in my bed sometimes by three men? ... It is I who want help now ..."

In the course of the next few years Ruskin suffered further terrible bouts of madness. He was to pay only one more visit to Venice in October 1888 when he was sixty-nine and had just been rejected by another young girl. He remained only a few days; he had to get away from "the elements of imagination" which haunted him there. Let us now turn back once more for comfort to Jan Morris's book and re-read one of those glorious Turner gleams of Ruskin's prime.

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TA1

commentary

A man could stand up

By Hermione Lee

Television and the Arts:
A Conference
St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh

On the other side of Edinburgh from St Cecilia's Hall, delegates to the Edinburgh International Television Festival carried on, as in previous years, what David Hearst referred to in *The Scotsman* as its "in-house soul-searching". There was much discussion of the expanding video market, of the implications of high-technology cable and satellite transmission, of union relations; much gossip about new jobs, and much advance salesmanship for TV-AM and Channel 4. Peter Jay, who was giving this year's MacTaggart lecture, quoted Adam Smith to the Festival Times interviewer:

People of the same trade seldom meet together even for merriment and diversion but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices.

implying that his lecture would raise the very theme of *The Wealth of Nations*, the hostility of "vested interests" to the ordinary citizen.

Meanwhile, at the week-long public conference on Television and the Arts at St Cecilia's Hall, the ordinary citizen might well have felt somewhat alienated from the professional. Huw Weldon, a booming, ruthless chairman, began the week by pointing to the number of TV "notables" in the audience, and, early in the first session, an angry anarchist in a white suit (who turned out to belong to the Fringe's "Paranoid Productions") expostulated at the "vulgar, frivolous and childish" nature of the discussion and at the use of first names. "Are you a conspiracy?" he asked, rhetorically, as he made his exit. Jeremy Isaacs called the question "arrogant, ignorant and wrong-headed", but the attack, for all its stage-managed character, was not so easily dismissed. There was a measure of complacency, and a feeling that the public's criticisms could be lightly disposed of, as when Sir Huw, concluding the first session, happily attributed the great superiority of British television to any other in the world ("and as for behind the Iron Curtain!") to "the mercy of God".

Professional complacency was most evident in the first general session about policy. Chris Dunkley's gallant attempts, at Sir Huw's prompting, to suggest that British television might have its limitations (no commissioning of experimental works, no regard for the genuinely popular as opposed to the "best known", no departure from "consensus" standards, no genre of its own apart from drama documentary, no arts on the news, no good social or political plays since the 1960s) glanced off harmlessly from the polished carapaces of what Weldon described as the "great grandees" of television: Brian Wenham (controller of BBC 2) and Jeremy Isaacs (Chief Executive of Channel 4). Wenham, apart from attributing the decline of TV plays to our younger writers' "rust back to nostalgia", hardly bothered to reply to the criticisms. Isaacs used them as an opportunity to plug Channel 4, which would be innovative, unisular, popular (if interested in jazz, rock and dance), experimental, educative, and altogether unlike BBC2. John Bakewell's brief appearances on *Newnight* were acclaimed as ample solution to the lack of arts on the news, and the complaint about political drama was answered by a jocular story of Dennis Potter's having been challenged (when he last appeared at Edinburgh, admitting that he had become more interested in Christianity than politics) by "a Marxist" in the audience who said that all writing should be about the class struggle. None of us, this audi-

ence was made to feel (the man in the white suit having long since left) would want to be so silly and boring.

Later in the week the level of discussion was improved by having, for each subject (the visual arts, music, literature, the past, theatre) speakers who were engaged with television in different ways, as fully committed producers or presenters (Melvyn Bragg, Humphrey Burton), as objective but knowledgeable critics (John Drummond, Owen Dudley-Edwards), as specialists (Magnus Magnusson), or as men whose creative work was involved to some degree with television (Jonathan Miller, John Mortimer, Raymond Leppard, Michel Holroyd). And I mean men. Apart from Marina Vaizey, speaking on the visual arts in the one programme I could not attend, there were no women on the panels. No female playwrights were discussed, no women writers were mentioned in all the talk about adaptations, and the only reference to a programme made by a woman was to Hilary Spurling's on Ivy Compton-Burnett. Melvyn Bragg said that television had a history of adapting works by "men of considerable genius"; Huw Weldon asked Jonathan Miller what advice he would give to a "man" who was writing a play for television. If only one overall impression was taken from the conference, it was of an inordinately male-dominated medium.

The apologists spoke with feeling. Melvyn Bragg made an impassioned case for the possibilities of length and detail in TV adaptations: literature on television has replaced the three-volume Victorian novel. Humphrey Burton argued that music on television is educative, restores the visual sense, and thereby concentration to lazy "home listeners", and builds up a valuable archive of performances. Patrick Nutegens enthused about architectural detail on television, and Jonathan Miller, responding to repeated suspicions of the integrity of drama documentaries, called fiction a surer way than fact at arriving at the truth. Whenever a grandiloquent defence of television was made, as when Huw Weldon fervently invoked the BBC producer's contractual undertakings ("to be true to your employer, to your audience, and to your subject") an implausibly moralistic note was struck. Descriptions of television's specific talents - for master classes, for sub-titled opera, for adaptations of short stories - were far more convincing.

But, by and large, it was a week for distrustful qualms rather than for celebration. Repeatedly, the challenges from the floor - an angry Scottish lady asking why no programme had ever been made on Robert the Bruce, a young Fringe writer challenging the moguls to trust him with £5,000 for a year, an archaeologist complaining that television had made archaeology too exciting - were met with obsequious, unalterable conditions: fear of boring the audience. (Robert the Bruce would give you nothing to look at, John Julius Norwich said), lack of space for the arts, financial pressures, and what emerged as an absence of policy. There was no selection procedure for literary subjects, Huw Weldon said: all producers "were looking for something to fall in love with".

Michael Holroyd's fastidious refusal to believe that television could ever be emotionally involving (at which Melvyn Bragg, and soon silent by "to interrupt" "Bullshit") and Raymond Leppard's dismissal of the "lawful sound" of television concerts, were countered easily enough by individual examples of good productions, both past (Jack Pullman's *War and Peace*, *Calvary Come Home*, Ken Russell's *Delius*) and recent (*The Godfather*, *The History Man*).

and by news of technological developments which would lead to "a stereophonic television in ten years' time in England" (it is already available in Germany and Japan).

Other criticisms were less easily dismissed. John Drummond, Festival organizer, late of BBC programmes such as *Spirit of the Age* and *Music Now*, who had devised the conference and took part in the session on music, scathingly indicted television's dogged "pursuit of what it does badly" - the public concert. What could television do with a concert other than follow the tunes round the orchestra? Why not take risks, instead, with analyses of contemporary music or with "music-theatre"? Why were the master-classes so much loved by Humphrey Burton in fact so unsatisfactory? Because of the insoluble clash between television's desire for the close-up, and teaching's need for the wide angle: you can't look both at Tortelier's face and at the pupil's bowing arm. Television, Drummond concluded, lent itself to personalities, not to music: it was significant that the BBC were recording the charismatic Bernstein, not Haitink, conducting Mahler. (Well, Burton reported, we're doing Haitink as well. That's it, said Drummond, telly people when challenged will always tell you, we did it.)

There was a strong attack from the ornately rhetorical Owen Dudley-Edwards on television's inability to be critical. If it made a biographical programme on Lytton Strachey it would have to present him as an altogether remarkable figure. Radio is the medium for criticism; on television, a presenter such as Bragg has to evangelize for the arts. Magnus Magnusson spoke lucidly on behalf of TV's ability to tell stories about history, but pinned down the flaw of drama documentaries and historical reconstructions such as *Churchill and the Generals*. Such programmes distort, because they don't attribute their sources, or distinguish between fact and fiction, or deviate from a "consensus" view of history, as though no disagreements between historians were possible.

That television, as Drummond said, is about personalities rather than the arts, and that it creates its own powerful body of conventions, was apparent from the references made in the discussions. There was, for instance, a predictable emphasis on popular genres - series and "factions" - as opposed to original plays or workshops. "Literature" meant fiction and plays. "And we must touch fleetingly on poetry", Sir Huw said blithely, but they never did.

Creative figures outside television were referred to with disheartening condescension. Jeremy Isaacs wryly said that Trevor Nunn's refusal to have RSC performances relayed led to nine expensive days re-staging *Macbeth* in the Warehouse. Humphrey Burton made a joke about Harrison Birtwistle keeping "himself waiting two years for an opera in which all the leading characters turn out to be sheep (I was reminded of Edmund Wilson's Hollywood story about Sam Goldwyn's horror at getting Masterlink as a script-writer: "My God! he says the hero is a bee!"). John Drummond shook his head over "Tippett's cutting out all shots of Colin Davis conducting his *Double Concerto*, as being too personal: "terribly dull piece of television".

A number of sacred success-images were repeatedly invoked: all discussion of adaptations led to *Nicholas Nickleby*, all references to modern music meant Maxwell Davies, all adventurous plays boiled down to Dennis Potter. And there was a strong sense of the ailing of personalities and hobby-horses (it was for this, presumably, that the conference was held and described



Television and the arts, 1930: the BBC and the Baird Company co-operated in a television broadcast of Pirandello's *The Man with a Flower in his Mouth*. The production was commissioned, in an atmosphere of deep uncertainty, by Val Gielgud, and directed by Lance Sieveking. George Inns, who did the effects, found it very primitive and concluded that TV had no future.

Leppard took the opportunity to castigate the Arts Council, John Drummond to explain why he had left the "ghettoized" arts departments of television.

A great change took place on the last day of the conference, when Jonathan Miller and John Mortimer conducted a humorous and intelligent argument about theatre and television, which, for once, Huw Weldon was unable to quash with his armoury of middlebrow platitudes. Mortimer made some good jokes (his example of popular series-drama was "six plays about lust in one, that evangelize for the arts. Magnus Magnusson spoke lucidly on behalf of TV's ability to tell stories about history, but pinned down the flaw of drama documentaries and historical reconstructions such as *Churchill and the Generals*. Such programmes distort, because they don't attribute their sources, or distinguish between fact and fiction, or deviate from a "consensus" view of history, as though no disagreements between historians were possible.

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A number of sacred success-images were repeatedly invoked: all discussion of adaptations led to *Nicholas Nickleby*, all references to modern music meant Maxwell Davies, all adventurous plays boiled down to Dennis Potter. And there was a strong sense of the ailing of personalities and hobby-horses (it was for this, presumably, that the conference was held and described

thoughts are different." It is dangerous to believe "that all novels are infinitely transferable into plays", that there's "an immutable structure which will survive transmuting". For this reason the adaptor, far from being self-effacing as Mortimer had suggested (he compared his role to that of a defence lawyer), should be bold: great stories are more successful the more they are "vandalized and reconstructed".

Miller spoke of his own attempts to reconstruct Shakespeare. Television was friendly to Shakespearean tragedy, because the use of close-ups and the possibility of unnaturalistic settings could answer to the tragic limbo of "elsewhere and elsewhere". Though, of course, limbo date: any producer's attempt to convey timelessness "eloquently represents that particular time's view of what timelessness is". Comedy, which requires some form of domestic reality, creates a greater difficulty, arising from "a disjunction between the space in which the audience sits and the space inside the glass membrane. You don't breathe the same air. It is a notional space of a geometrically different character, an electronic icon, not a space you can go into." "No," said John Mortimer, "it's a bit of Japanese ironmongery, it's a bit good to hear somebody thinking."

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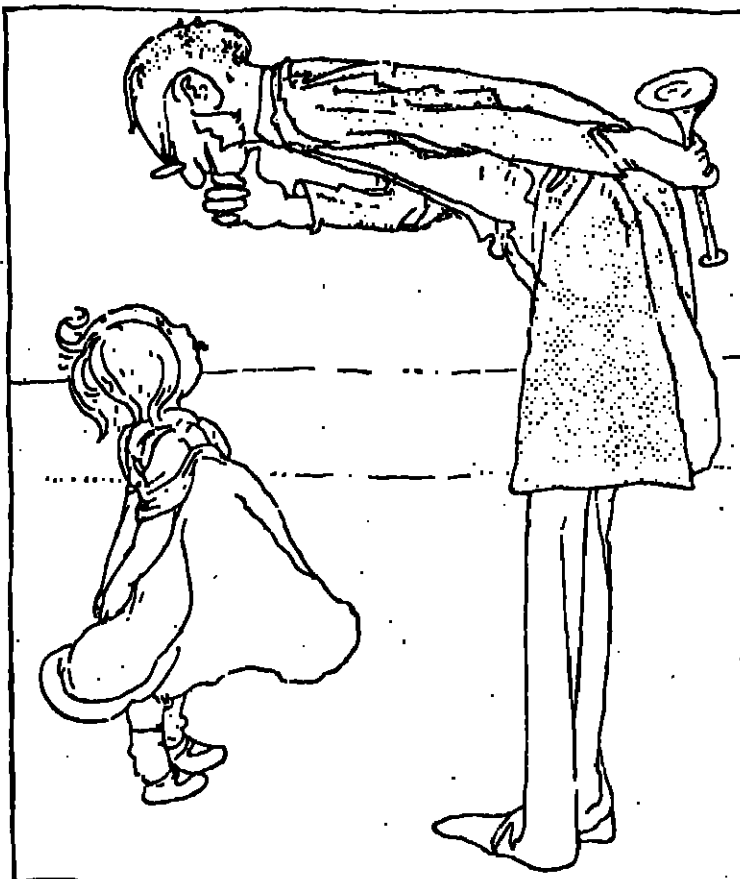
In a book published under the title of *Rich Boys and Poor Boys* in 1833 Mrs Barbara Hofland included a short story extolling the value of story books. Charles, a gentleman's son, wishes to give William, the son of a small farmer, a copy of Miss Edgeworth's *Parent's Assistant*, from which he himself had derived benefit. He is rebuked by Mr Maynard, one of his father's friends, who tells him that such tales are a waste of time for everyone, particularly for a boy such as William who should be provided with copy books and manuals of accountancy suitable for the life of useful toil he will have to lead, and not tales which only show him pleasures he can never share, and awake ambitions it would be wrong for him to feel. Charles "with great modesty" ventures to dispute the point. "My father says that in early life the heart requires educating, not less than the understanding; and whilst we were children and under my mother's care, our reading was directed to the formation of our dispositions."

It is a tale that is interesting on many counts. It debates a doctrine that was to dominate many decades of Victorian publishing - that the children of the leisured and the working classes were so totally different that on a secular level neither could read the books of the other with any profit. It is a defence of fiction, which at that time was under fire from utilitarians and evangelicals alike (though it has to be observed that this only extends to fiction with a purpose: Charles points out meaningfully that the useful stories on which he and his brother were reared were very different from the parent-families in the Greater Manchester Area) and described television limbo of "elsewhere and elsewhere". Though, of course, limbo date: any producer's attempt to convey timelessness "eloquently represents that particular time's view of what timelessness is". Comedy, which requires some form of domestic reality, creates a greater difficulty, arising from "a disjunction between the space in which the audience sits and the space inside the glass membrane. You don't breathe the same air. It is a notional space of a geometrically different character, an electronic icon, not a space you can go into." "No," said John Mortimer, "it's a bit of Japanese ironmongery, it's a bit good to hear somebody thinking."

All of us who collect children's

books have many examples of reward books, some with the flyleaf inscribed in faded copperplate, some with splendid coloured bookplates: "Public School, Croydon Park, first prize for plain needlework"; "Manchester School Board - special reward for exemplary punctuality"; "Cold Ashton Sunday School - for repetition." And at the back of them are advertisements for others, indicating what a vast industry it all was. Frederick Warne, for instance, in the 1890s, could bring his prices in the *Dawn of Day* series down to fourpence (cloth) for perennial favourites such as *The Basket of Flowers* and *The Dairyman's Daughter* (which had originally appeared, the one in 1833, the other in 1809), while rising to six shillings (extra cloth gilt; gilt edges) for such matters as *The Pictorial Cabinet of Marvels*, no doubt aimed at the more prosperous boys' private schools. Shaw's, about the same date, put their list into categories: Eightpenny Present Books (seemingly for the cottage home); Stories with a Purpose (all at 3s 6d); Helpful Stories for Elder Girls (which went up to five shillings); and Stories for Girls (rather cheaper). In many homes the prizes might be the only fiction, if not the only books, and would be cherished as much for decoration as for anything contained inside the covers. And they were cherished as objects, the immaculate condition in which we find so many of them is proof of that. There is indeed a warning in a story published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, *The Sunday School Prize*, about desiring such a book too much. Lucy Austin, the prize pupil of her Sunday school, with an unblemished record of attendance and conduct, reveals the old Adam in her by a frenzy of grief when illness and consequent loss of attendance deprives her of the first prize for the year - "such a beautiful one, in a red cover, all over gold and a lot of pictures".

The prizes had not always been books. Raikes in the 1790s used to dispense combs as well as books outside Gloucester Cathedral to the urchins who had accompanied him to seven o'clock prayers. Hannah More rewarded the regular attenders at her Mendip schools with pennies and ginger-bread during the year, and books at the end of it - a Bible as first prize, a Prayer Book as second, and Cheap Repository Tracts for the rest. In 1809 the Religious Tract Society started on its career of juvenile publishing by listing certain hawkers' tracts as "adapted for reward, and peace". By 1879 it was no longer books to the children of Sunday



"I do not like thee, Doctor Fell", one of Charles Robinson's illustrations for *The Big Book of Nursery Rhymes*, 1911. The picture is taken from *Popular Nursery Rhymes* edited by Jennifer Mulholland (100pp Granada. £5.95, 0 246 11492 4). This collection which is illustrated by drawings from early editions of nursery rhymes will be published on September 24.

Schools" (these now being firmly attempting to convey those important truths directly; the Boy's Own Paper founded in that year aimed at no more than healthy tone. By 1913 it had apparently so far abandoned its early high principles that it could advertise its reward books, with no indication of their contents, as "good bulk, well-printed, admirably illustrated, well-bound".

And much the same pattern could be discerned everywhere. The buyers of reward books by the 1880s were generally looking for "wholesome" books of "good tone" rather than ones that gave direct teaching on religion or morals. Nor was their choice generally governed by the social class of the reader, though old attitudes might linger in country parishes where squararchical influence still made itself felt. Board School children no longer had to be given stories with a setting that was familiar (there are signs, however, that the pedagogues of the 1980s wish to revert to this policy); there was a great deal of historical fiction, and the

London School Board included fairy tales and fantasy on its library lists.

But what had been the impact of the earlier style of reward book? Barbara Hofland's story of William and his books tells us what the *Parent's Assistant* did; it had corrected want of courage in one boy, taught Sissy Sally to be humble and obedient, made Nancy industrious, and so on. As a writer of moral stories herself she would indeed like to think that they had impact. But in real life? I myself would surmise that the examples of infant piety and death which from Janeway's *Token for Children* in 1671 until the early nineteenth century was staple Sunday reading for the young evangelist had a profound effect upon Dickens and thus through him on scores of minor writers. Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopaedia*, which implied in all its studies of direct lives that anybody could be a genius if he took pains undoubtedly owed much to Samuel Smiles. But had Smiles himself (born in 1812) been influenced by the little stories of the industrious apprentice sort so popular in the late Georgian period?

Dr Bratton has avoided all speculation of this sort. Her book is not about the impact but about the message itself. She gives a brief account of the various types of reader, of their educational and religious background and then devotes herself to their reading. Here she is, one senses, rather hampered because so much has already been written on this subject during the last few years. Nancy Cunniff, for instance, in *Miniature Angels* in 1979 wrote a full account of the careers and achievements of Charlotte Tucker - A.L.O.E. - and Mesha Strout, and Dr Bratton, with equally full accounts, has nothing new to add. And - perhaps because she feels too much has already been said - she hardly touches on the schoolboy ethic. The manliness preached by Arnold and misinterpreted by Thomas Hughes, for instance, had a profound effect on school stories after *Tom Brown*, books very popular as rewards; and we know too something of the impact of *Eric or Little by Little* on its readers from the letters that Reginald Farrar quotes in his life of his father. But on the credit side she has made a full and sympathetic study of Elizabeth Sewall, and of such American favourites as *The Wide, Wide World* and *The Lighthouse* (but not *Elsie Dinsmore*) produced an authoritative account of the reward book trade and its publishers - and has read more of Kingdon's work than surely anybody living. The book is both serious and scholarly and contains useful background material.

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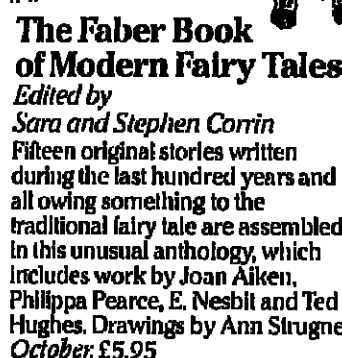
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FROM  ANDRE DEUTSCH

T.L.S.

Three essays on didactic aspects of children's literature in other cultures are thrilling, rewarding, occasionally surprising, and enlightening. The first, from *Barnes, Children's Island* by Ursula Jersild, translated by Mallory and Ann Charters with an introduction by Ann Charters, is a bleak description of post-welfare-architected urban Sweden. "There was actually nothing that children were best at, except possibly creeping in and out of small windows," Marian Ury, in "Stepmother Tales in Japan," unveils an oriental obsession that might be explained by jealousies inherent in a polygamous society where life expectancy was short, either parent

F. Tennyson Jesse's *Moonraker*, first published in 1927, may come as a surprise to today's readers winning in an age when the word "pirate" is applied to those who steal from the public domain and should be assiduously pursuing carpentry. Privately Tennyson Jesse's novel is a sea-buckling story of pirates on the high seas, of "niggers," of ladies in Empire dresses, which reads like a latter-day *Coriolanus*. But in addition to this — and surely why it has just been reprinted in the Virago Modern Classics series — beneath the Victorian classicism it can serve as a commentary on the difference between the debate on the difference between the sexes.

In *Moonraker* the debate about the freedom of women is deliberately made a reflection of another struggle — the fight for liberation in Saint-Domingue (Haiti) by the black slaves under the leadership of Toussaint L'Ouverture. But like this mixture sound too much like an overbearing tract for the times; it should be said

It is well-known that the poorer taste of children, the more gazes; television is likely to be the worst culprit. But the memory, "social interchange with parents," and quite a few other skills usually considered pleasant and desirable, The Singers conclude somewhat helplessly that since the set is here to stay "we have to begin to find ways of taking its tremendous power of attraction for children and harnessing that for more effective education". Tom Davenport describes his attempt in his live-action novel *Hansel and Gretel: An Appalachian Tale*, a film of Grimm Brothers' folktales. Maureen Gaffney, Director of the Media Center for Children in New York, evaluates Davenport's film translation and finds it an "effective essence of the original" that helps the most optimistic expect that Morton Schindel's *Paid in Full*—a series of 20 Windows, where children's books have been successfully adapted to film since the 1950s—Though he feels that Isaac Bashevis Singer and Bruno Bettelheim's warnings against the telling of fairy/tale/folktales with didactic intention are particularly applicable to film, that film and televisions' passive experience is no substitute for reading, he justifies his commitment to media "that have no other comparable power to lead people back to the book on which a film is based", by citing statistics such as the sale figures for copies of *Hansel's Roots* after syndication of the television series based on that book.

Brother Blue is an American black of humble origin who clawed his way through Harvard in the 1940s, studied divinity with the intention of becoming a cleric, then studied drama and mythology and later, under the influence of A. B. Lord, became interested in the oral tradition. He refuses to accept payment for his "act" and, supported by his schoolteacher wife, improvises magical stories all over America — on the street, on television, in community theaters and schools. He keeps his act close to the traditional dress of African storytellers, his clothes are pinned with "talismans", butterflies, rainbows, a saxophone, any of which, in interaction with the audience, can inspire an impromptu fable. If he senses that he cannot sustain an audience he retreats behind a mask. Similarly, he refuses to discuss his views on children's television, its personalities, children's literature and despairs that he calls "the idolatry of teachers and librarians who memorize a book or story in order to tell it to children. Although he has won many awards for his extemporary entertainment, he has consistently refused to tape or record his message — an immediate message, conveyed through jokes or mime, undiminished by erudition and experience, that teaches the same sort of values that are dear

A country of customs

Light Trees is the farmhouse the Bateman family rents. Batemans and Teesdales nearly fall to get along at first, before Bell and young Harry Bateman take a hand (these two meet and quickly become friends for life). Friction – the result of a misunderstanding – is smoothed over and an alliance established between the two families. Summer after summer the London Batemans come and often in the winter as well. The place is rich in anecdotes and alarms something is always going on, and everything is relished to the utmost.

This goes for weather and seasons too. There is a blaze of colour in the meadows "a bar of pale yellow running hazy with white. The herds drift

Outlandish parts

The response to recession should be adaptation. The Bodley Head have adapted to hard times by introducing a new format paperback: original, launching upon the public a bumper crop of four novels, two under the Books for New Adults imprint and two simply under The Bodley Head.

Both Books for New Adults are about girls growing up. Linda Hoyt's first book, *Rebecca*, is a novel, and is presumably an ironic title, as the only thing about Rebecca is that she has no friends. Her hand, and her voice, are raised against everyone in sight, especially the unfortunate staff of the school she attends. Rebecca's trouble is that her adored Quaker mother died when she was a child, and she has to grow up short time before the opening of the school. Her father has turned out to be a drunk, vomiting her up and down from the garden crocus bed. Her own inability to cope is epitomized by buying Crispy Cod Fries and dried-out tins of baked beans. However, there is one bright spot on the horizon; the school drama class. After an introductory session, the class is encouraged to improvise on themes from *King Lear*. Rebecca, by that of course, is now understanding, acts out her own emotional problems and helps her

A ring of old green turf marks the Celtic settlement, secret water runs inside the hills where gorse and wild thyme grow in profusion. The supernatural is evoked with feeling and also with a spark of humour. "Used to be to vampires up under" the hills, "telling tales of the old legends and legends abound in the fruitful uplands. Kendal, the sweep, who takes the Bate-mans fishing on a wet day, is once a storyteller; Old Hewitson, Bell's grandfather, is another. Kendal well knows how to set the atmosphere: "telling tales of the old legends and legends in the yard" – before embarking on the old tale about the Hand of Glory. Mrs Bateman, who happens on one occasion, to step out of doom in a flannel nightdress and antique apron, is mistaken for a ghost. Every custom is charged with significance.

With this book, Jane Gardam has reverted to the "linked stories" framework of her earlier *Black Faces: White Faces* (for adults only). In each episode, a character's misadventure in a neighbourhood is achieved or disaster averted. Bell and Harriet get into a tight spot underground but luck and resourcefulness get them out of it. A "household worrier" (a female television celebrity), whose manner frightens the downright wilders, considers buying an out-of-the-way farm but is brought to her senses after a flood. Thieves' makeshifts off unsuccessfully with an antique table, and its owner is thereby apprised of its worth. In the local

The children's story traditionally ends on a bright note, as these stories do; nothing else in Jane Gardam's writing is so conventional. She makes the most, as always, of the subtle and the untoward. Her work has always created problems of classification: when she writes about children, it is in a way that does not exclude an adult readership. *The Hollow Land* is typical in this respect: there is not a limited, trite or chatty observation in it. It creates an overwhelming impression of vigour and freshness. The aids to picturesqueness living it enumerates – the lovely red-and-white patchwork quilts, the old oak settles and grandfatherly clocks – all contribute to the sense of order and continuity which is part of the countryside's charm. (There is no undue regard for tradition among these country people, though; they would as soon have a new money tree as a cumbrous heirloom.) And the "London mother" Mrs Balemant laughs at herself for dressing in Victorian clothes.)

Jane Gardam's writing is as exact as condensed and striking as ever. Underlying the engaging plots of these stories — plenty of frolic and fun — is a single theme: attachment to a special locality. In the William Morris prose romance of the same title (an elaborate fable which contains the three simple verses of Jane Gardam's epigraph) the Hollow Land is appropriately a dream country — "second best" (after Heaven), as Morris has it, "of the places God has made".

force and vivid imagination; he depicts vile Borribles, viler policemen and vilest of all, the Wendies. The reader smells the state urine, sees the oozing sewage. The question is: does the reader want to?

In *The Firelings* Kendall has written a positive and exciting tale of these folk "who were no bigger than Firelings were meant to be." They live on an active volcanic peninsula, personified as The Belcher, whose arms and legs are the solidified remains of previous outpourings of lava, whose roars and rumbles are the sound of volcanic and maternal resentment. As the underground rumblings increase, the older Fireling establishment threatens to relapse into propitiatory superstition. It is the young Firelings who work together to decipher ancient inscriptions and interpret the dangers, lead the community through a labyrinth to refuge. Miss Kendall writes easily. She has created a convincing mythology, a credible vocabulary, a believable society; in short, a believable and attractive new world. I hope we shall see more of it before long.

The Bodley Head have recently published a set of thirty-five facsimile editions of *Early English Children's Books*. The Bodley Head Children's Collection (Toronto £275 plus Ontario Collection tax) contains 30 vols. (30 vols. only £125, then £325, 0-3 370-30371 7). The books which are produced with paper, ink, colour, and binding matching the original editions demonstrate the wide range of children's books in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They include *Orbis Sensualium Pictoris* by J. A. Comenius (1577), *The Birthday Gift* or *The Joy of a New Doll*. From papers cut by a needle (1796) - one of the earliest examples of a children's picture book - several chapbooks. *The Butterfly's Ball* and *The Grasshopper's Feast* by William Roscoe (1807), a table game *Twenty-One* of *Crane's Puss in Boots* (1810) and Walter Crane's *My First Alphabet* (1897). This is a companion volume of contemporary by Margaret Crawford Malone the Head of Osborne Collection. It included with the set.

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Second helpings

By Lucy Micklethwait

This is a selection of children's picture-books for the younger age group published with Christmas in view. Like any helping of Christmas pudding, it contains much that is heavy going, but there is one book of outstanding quality — a silver sipping through the stiver. There is also a particular book that I at least, found quite inedible.

Ron and Ate van der Meer apparently consider that children should come to terms with life at an early age. The least disturbing of their books deals with the everyday matters that make Mum annoyed, Dad angry, Granny furious, and the children miserable. Their latest book *I'm fed up!* contains a similar set of dull, ill-tempered adults and sullen children. Finding life at home intolerable, the horrid Paula meets her "other self" who produces some magic sweets with the power to turn her into anything she feels like. Predictably she finds life even less tolerable elsewhere and finally decides that she was better off at home. Children, if given the chance, may choose this book for its clear bright pictures, but I should carry Government Health Warning, for it is raw and humourless from start to finish.

Let's Play gives a reassuring, if bland, view of life. It shows some contented children playing with a series of toys. The children are scrubbed and immaculately dressed in bloomers or sailor suit, and I suspect that Nanny is lurking off-stage with a hairbrush. All is clean and clear and calmly painted. The names of the toys are written in bold black type and provide some scope for word recognition.

Why the Rope Went Tight, written by Bamber Gascoigne and illustrated by his wife Christina, promised to be a really clever book. And I not been expecting so much from the text, it might not have been so disappointed. A clown gives Mike one end of a rope which is dragged over the edge of the page because "just round the corner was Frank the Furrier, who had sold the World's Longest Frankfurter to Mike's friend Millie, who had been given the other end of the rope by the clown." So the frankfurter is stretched over to the next page because, we discover, it had been grabbed by a dog called Pedigree Chimp whose lead goes tight because "... and so on past a host of grotesque characters all the way round the perimeter of the big top until we see Lickchop Leo, the fiercest, greediest, and most generally rumpulent and bumptious lion that Creation has ever known", who, if it weren't for the chain fixed securely on the previous page, would be devouring Mike who is still hanging onto his rope. Of the circus folk, all dressed in the colours of neapolitan ice-cream and boiled sweets. I particularly enjoyed Glob the Blob in his Billy Bunter specs and his stunning striped suit.

The Wild Baby by Barbro Lindgren and Eva Eriksson concerns a mischievous toddler called Bodger who "Eats toothpaste worms, and snips his hair, / Smashes his toys, torments and teases / Swinging on pretend trapezes". His mother is permanently on the verge of a nervous breakdown and there is an insensitive scene in which the child is seen falling down the loo ("Help, help, I'm drowning"). The structure is bad and the translation is worse, but the illustrations are good — a cross between Edward Ardizzone on a windswept day and Posy Simmonds.

Alex is the story of a little boy who juggles and lives with his Aunt Sofie-with-an-f, a fussy old boot who does the dusting with the aid of a magnifying glass ("Ahi Half an eyelash!"), and his Uncle Phileas-without-one who doesn't do much at all. Alex runs away to join the circus with his aunt in

RON AND ATE VAN DER MEER: *I'm Fed Up!* Hamish Hamilton, £3.95, 0 241 10483 1.

SATOMI ICHIKAWA: *Let's Play*. Heinemann, £3.95, 0 434 94365 7.

BAMBER AND CHRISTINA GASCOIGNE: *Why the Rope Went Tight*. Methuen/Walker Books, £3.95, 0 416 05007 4.

MARY TOZER: *Queen Yesno*. World's Work, £3.95, 0 437 79422 9.

PETER SPIER: *Fire Station* (0 00 140137 8), *Food Market* (0 00 14139 4), *The Pet Shop* (0 00 14135 1), *The Toy Shop* (0 00 140134 3), *Bill's Garage* (0 00 140136 X), *My School* (0 00 140138 6). Collins, £1.50 each.

BARBARA LINDGREN AND EVA ERIKSSON: *The Wild Baby*. Alexander and Soughton, £3.50, 0 340 26573 0.

GIANNI PAOLALE: *The Amazing Juggler*. Ernest Benn, £4.75, 0 510 00089 4.

JANET AND ALLAN AHLBERG: *Peepol*. Kestrel, £4.50, 0 7226 3707 2.

Photographics

By Ruth Hawthorn

Methuen have produced the first twelve volumes of a new series called "Chatterbooks" for very small children, all illustrated by photographs. They contain the work of three different photographers who have, except in the case of John Walmsley, also provided the words. A note to the storyteller is printed at the back of each book to the effect that you can read the printed text if you like, but you may find it more effective just to talk about the pictures. It also suggests that the books will appeal to children from about eight months onwards, and, although I agree that the series as a whole will cover a long period from babyhood to five or older, individually the books seem to be aimed at specific age groups.

The four books by Helen Piers consist of simple animal pictures, good for young children but not very different from each other nor from a large number of similar books already on the market. (Helen Piers herself has written and photographed some very good ones.) The pictures are rather variable in quality but a few are outstanding. In particular there is one of a child and a chimpanzee sitting side by side appreciating a large red ball which they are touching with their finger tips. They have exactly the same expression of contemplative pleasure on their faces. There is another of an elephant seen from the front, stretching his trunk a long way down to reach a drink of water. Eventually I remembered where I had seen the gesture before — in a Babar book. It is much more interesting as a photograph and much harder to achieve. A clever artist can bring out the animalness of animals — or their humanness — as required, by with the flick of a felt pen but a simple snap of a pig, say, may not trigger any response at all.

The four by Leila Berg and John Walmsley have a slightly more mature appeal. They tell simple stories and feature many more children and mothers (really my only serious objection to any of these books is that there are not enough fathers). The fact that they are photographs rather than drawings is important: real life-children in real, less than perfect homes doing familiar things, in the hands of a good photographer have a very good chance of catching the attention. In *In a house I know* there's a mother who really is very familiar in her old cord jeans with two nappy pins stuck in the sleeve of her jumper and forgotten, giving the sort of one-year-old I used to know a good old-fashioned hug. *A tickle and a good walk* are rather alike; *A tickle* has a stronger story line and contains a photograph that captures that wonderful expression on children's faces when they know a tickle is coming, paralysed with delight. *The hot, hot day* uses language with more

care: "It was hot, so hot. I said I would stay in the sun and never go in till morning". It is printed next to a photograph of a little girl in deep thought, holding a piece of bread and marmalade halfway to her mouth and dressed in nothing but a large white towel. This clearly genuine utterance matches the photographic record with a wonderful, unsentimental precision.

Camilla Jessel's four books are on a different level again. She deals with four uncertain moments in a child's life, telling a story around a real child and photographing her way, medium cool, through their genuine anxiety and comfort. All these four work very well indeed. They have great individuality, and because they are about important things there seems more point to them, though this does not stop them being great fun and not at all pious. *Going to the doctor* is beautifully photographed: Clare obviously did feel absolutely terrible, cuddled forlornly in her mother's lap and sucking her blanket, but was gradually cheered by the old doctor routine ("No!" said Clare. But then she said, "Yes"). *Away for the night* is just as accurate, capturing that look on the brink of panic as Anna is abandoned, and the subsequent stages of forgetting about her mother as she becomes intrigued by familiar processes in an unfamiliar home. *Moving house* is also good ("You can't have it — it's mine!" the hero wails as the removal men carry his bed downstairs). But best of all is *The new baby*, not because of any new suggestions or insights, but because the family appears so genuinely happy, and so at ease in the presence of the photographer. There is also a very nice father in this book. As the publishers point out, photographs do enable a child to recognize and identify with many of the pictures. Whatever the power of the photographs in the books generally, the atmosphere of real love comes over in this one to an extent that drawings could not achieve.

HELEN PIERS: *Animal Notes* (0 416 88820 8), *Animal Homes* (0 416 88840 2), *Animal Babies* (0 416 88850 X), *Eat up* (0 416 88820 8).

LEILA BERG AND JOHN WALMSLEY: (0 416 88780 5), *A tickle* (0 416 88780 5), *Hot walk* (0 416 88810 1), *The hot, hot day* (0 416 88790 2), *In a house I know* (0 416 88800 3).

CAMILLA JESSEL: *Moving house* (0 416 88800 1), *The new baby* (0 416 88860 7), *Going to the doctor* (0 416 88890 9), *Away for the night* (0 416 88870 4).

Methuen, £1.25 each.

Blackwell Raintree (108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF) have recently published a series of picture books intended to teach young children simple concepts. The first six titles in their "Beginning to Learn About" series are *Numbers*, *Opposites*, *Colours*, *Hearing*, *Shapes* and *Looking*. They are £2.50 net each.

To amuse and entertain

By Kicki Moxon Browne

My own children and young friends all wholeheartedly approved of *The Queen of the Whales*. For my part I had reservations about it but decided in the end that J-P Lamerand dealt successfully with the subject of whale conservation. The satire is broad: the characters are either Mr Men-like stereotypes (polluter pirates, promoter pirates and killer pirates) or fat sight reminiscent of Nicola Bayley, although it has a lighter and more casual touch. This is her second book, following her award-winning *Sybil* and the *Blue Rabbit*. Bertie is youngest (apart from the baby) of a large, bustling Edwardian family on a day trip to the seaside. Everybody finds Bertie a bit of a nuisance, so he sneaks away to watch a show of some clowns on a rather humble, makeshift stage. He is then transported to a grand circus with himself as the star attraction: the trapeze artist, the lion tamer, the bareback rider, and the human cannonball. There are rich and detailed illustrations both of the Edwardian seaside and the circus. The text is kept to a minimum.

The Garden of Abdul Gazazi, which is both written and illustrated by Chris van Allsburg, is also set in Edwardian times, and here again the illustrations take precedence over the text. The story in this case is more elaborate, and is nicely conceived but rather hesitantly put together. Sometimes it gives the impression of a resumé of a longer story (frequently resorting to phrases such as "some distance beyond", "after a long search" or "an hour later"). On the other hand the black and white illustrations are executed with a very sure hand: there is some wonderfully expressive play of light and shade, great lurking shadows, and skies luminously clouded or starry, all fitting in with the slightly sinister mood of the story.

In structuring a short story Oscar Wilde could not be faulted, but I suspect that the particular blend of sentimentality and bitterness to be found in his fairy stories, first published in 1888, may be a little too much for today's children. *The Nightingale and the Rose* is one of these stories. It seems almost unbearable that we should be left with the rose in the gutter and the nightingale dead, having made her sacrifice for nothing. But while the story itself may be difficult to stomach, the illustrations by Michael Foreman and Freire Wright are quite exquisite: wispy and dreamlike with colours that gently bleed and subtly emphasize every turn of the story.

A must for cat lovers is *The Patchwork Cat*, in which Nicola Bayley has caught beautifully the expressiveness of a domestic cat: luxuriously sleek, shamelessly yawning, or bent double licking the inside of her thigh, each individual hair almost tangibly real. The cat in this story, Tabby, is passionately fond of her own patchwork quilt, and of the milkman who calls at the house each day. She regards the family that stays in "her" house with a certain superior resignation. One day the family stoops so low as to throw away her patchwork quilt. She has

various nasty experiences while recovering it, involving rats and a rubbish dump and losing her way home. She is finally saved by the milkman, who obviously understands her perfectly, referring to her "pretty patchwork quilt that's all the fashion". William Mayne's text gambols and lolls and twitches in a most catlike fashion, turning into and out of occasional rhyme, assonance and blank verse.

JANE JOHNSON: *Bertie on the Beach*. Ernest Benn, £3.95, 0 510 00112 2.

CHRIS VAN ALLSBURG: *The Garden of Abdul Gazazi*. Hamish Hamilton, £4.50, 0 241 10453 X.

OSCAR WILDE: *The Nightingale and the Rose*. Illustrated by Freire Wright and Michael Foreman. Kaye & Ward, £3.75, 0 7182 1259 2.

NINA BAWDEN; *William Tell*. Illustrated by Pascale Allamand. Jonathan Cape, £3.95, 0 224 01940 6.

URSULA K. LE GUIN: *Leese Webster*. Illustrated by James Brunnsman. Gollancz, £4.50, 0 575 02958 7.

WILLIAM MAYNE: *The Patchwork Cat*. Illustrated by Nicola Bayley. Jonathan Cape, £3.95, 0 224 01925 2.

JANE JOHNSON: *Bertie on the Beach*. Ernest Benn, £3.95, 0 510 00112 2.

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URSULA K. LE GUIN: *Leese Webster*. Illustrated by James Brunnsman. Gollancz, £4.50, 0 575 02958 7.

not a word too much or too little. The story is complemented by Pascale Allamand, the naïvist style toning down, by formalizing, the more brutal aspects of the story. *Leese Webster* by Ursula Le Guin is about a little scrap of a spider and her quest for beauty. It is such a perfect story that it would not be fair or indeed possible to sum it up in a few words. This is how it starts:

In a deserted palace, in the throne room where mice nested in the tattered carpeting and owls lived in chandeliers and the throne itself was festooned with ropes of ancient cobweb, black with dust, a family of spiders hatched.

It is Ursula Le Guin's first picture book and I hope there will be more.

J-P LAMERAND: *The Queen of the Whales*. Kaye & Ward, £3.50, 0 7182 3720 X.

RONDA ARMITAGE: *Ice Creams for Rosie*. Illustrated by David Armitage. André Deutsch, £4.50, 0 233 97361 3.

CELIA BERRIDGE: *Grandmother's Tales*. André Deutsch, £4.95, 0 233 97357 5.

WILLIAM MAYNE: *The Patchwork Cat*. Illustrated by Nicola Bayley. Jonathan Cape, £3.95, 0 224 01925 2.

JANE JOHNSON: *Bertie on the Beach*. Ernest Benn, £3.95, 0 510 00112 2.

CHRIS VAN ALLSBURG: *The Garden of Abdul Gazazi*. Hamish Hamilton, £4.50, 0 241 10453 X.

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Different views

By Ruth Harris

Dawn and Peter Cope:

Red Riding Hood's Favourite Fairy Tales

Dawn and Peter Cope:

Humpty Dumpty's Favourite Nursery Rhymes

0 906671 08 6

Webb and Bower, £3.95 each.

There was a craze for picture postcards at the beginning of this century and old albums can still be found at the back of nursery cupboards with double slots in the dark paper to take the postcard either way. Children collected the postcards that were sent to them and stuck them into these albums: pictures of foreign towns, of saucy kittens and in particular of characters from fairy tales and nursery rhymes and Dawn and Peter Cope have illustrated their engaging books with a selection of these cards published between 1881 and 1925. Now the book-illustrator and the postcard designer work to different specifications. A Rackham or a Dulac makes the story his own and nobody who has seen the true princess on that pile of patchwork mattresses can ever forget her. She belongs to Dulac's imagination. The illustrator helps you see the beast-stalk while Jack is climbing up it whereas the postcard is there as a reminder and has to be a summary. Decorated by postcards, the stories and rhymes perhaps are more themselves because they are not coloured by a particular genius but take place in a more various and rub-a-dub world. There is more of the common touch.

These stories read aloud extremely well and what good stories they are. It is "It's all the better to eat you with" that one remembers rather than the ending of Red Riding Hood which can never be quite satisfactory, and "Someone's been sitting in my chair" rather than Goldilocks herself. When a story is illustrated by postcards in entirely different styles, it is like chugging the production between the acts of a play. Cinderella sitting by the fire could be "Her First Sermon" less well drawn but she leaves the Art Deco palace in a dress quite possibly designed by Eric — confusing perhaps to the child but fascinating to the parent. In one version Sleeping Beauty is a little girl gone to sleep on the sofa and in the other she is a chocolate-box blonde waiting for the kiss of her Principal Boy. But then we all think of fairy stories in a hundred different ways. They are part of the landscape of our minds and a postcard Cinderella can be just as relevant as Margot Fonteyn with her exquisite broom. There is a newcomer among these tales, "The Featler of Finist the Falcon", a Russian story with two illustrations by Ivan Bilbin and these really are illustrations to help to set the story, a lovely tale of three sisters, a scarlet flower and the bright falcon who turns into a prince; but Puss in Boots and Blue Beard need no explaining and cheeky Puss and dear little Fatima are simply there to point and ornament the tale.

In the Nursery Rhyme book there is one postcard to each rhyme except for the two Randolph Caldecott drawings for "Where are you going to, my pretty maid?" and these perhaps are a mistake as, delicious as they are, they are so much part of a series that to show only two of them leaves blanks in the story. Caldecott was not a postcard designer. He makes a new and detailed world for us to live in and it is essentially a world of movement and continuity. You have to turn the page to see what happened to the dish and the spoon after they ran away together. There are collectors' items by Cecil Aldin and John Hassall but sometimes an unknown designer can be more effective. An enchanting Goosey Gander by Anon (1903) shows a little girl on her knees besides a very solemn goose and a different Anon (also 1903) makes Jack and Jill have a really dreadful tumble down that hill with water streaming headlong from the upset pail. Perhaps the most endearing of them all is "I love little pussy" with the pussy cuddled in the little girl's pinafore but the page is a delight. Even the patch-a-book in full of hunting pink — no Banbury Cross and there can't be rings inside those boots — has a certain nasty charm and the children by the nut-tree, a sickle moon above them in the yellow evening sky, would surely be able to recognize the King of Spain's daughter. When different travellers bring us conflicting views of another country we are the more convinced and especially when they are describing a country that we have visited ourselves. These two books will help us remember what it was like to live there.

URSULA K. LE GUIN: *Leese Webster*. Illustrated by James Brunnsman. Gollancz, £4.50, 0 575 02958 7.

WILLIAM MAYNE: *The Patchwork Cat*. Illustrated by Nicola Bayley. Jonathan Cape, £3.95, 0 224 01925 2.

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From PEPPÉ to PEEPO!

The pick of pre-school picture books from Kestrel

Rodney Peppé THE MICE WHO LIVED IN A SHOE

Rodney Peppé at his most ingenious builds up an enchanting miniature world in this tale of how a family of mice transform an old shoe into a remarkable home. £4.25 Published next Thursday



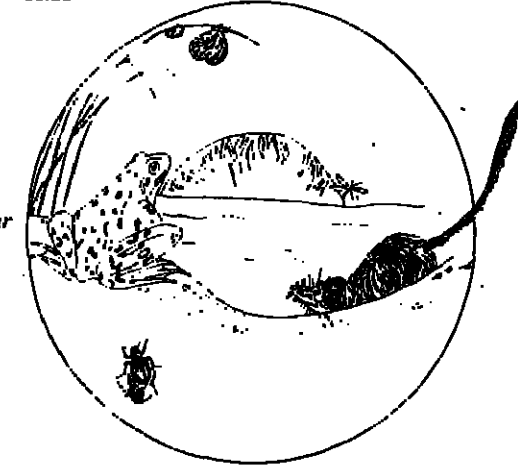
Helen Piers FROG AND WATER SHREW

Illustrated by Pauline Baynes
Pauline Baynes' richly detailed and decorative pictures enhance this charming countryside tale which promises to be as well-loved as the same team's *Snail and Caterpillar* and *Grasshopper and Butterfly*. £4.25 Published next Thursday



Rosemary Wells TIMOTHY GOES TO SCHOOL

All children have to undergo the experience of starting school and Rosemary Wells' delightfully humorous story of Timothy's first days will be universally appreciated. £3.95



Coming on 16 October Janet and Allan Ahlberg PEEPO!

The latest irresistible treat for the very young from the award-winning creators of *Each Peach Pear Plum*. Here, with the help of strategically placed holes in the page, the youngest reader can play 'peek-a-boo' with the baby in the story and share with him the fun of exploring his surroundings. £4.50

Kestrel Books

Family trouble

By Judith Elkin

GERALDINE KAYE:
The Day After Yesterday
Illustrated by Glenys Ambrus
Andre Deutsch. £4.25.
0 233 97344 3

GRISelda GIFFORD:
Earwig and Beetle
Gollancz. £4.50.
0 575 030070

Finding satisfactory stories for the middle age range has always been difficult. It is not easy, within the limitations of a relatively short story, to create convincing characters, atmosphere and plot. Here are two new books by authors who in the past have contributed significantly in this area.

Geraldine Kaye has always demonstrated a positive and diverse interest in other cultures in her stories for children, as well as the ability to write a good story. This is reflected in some of her early books set in Malaya and Africa, such as *Kassim Goes Fishing* and *Kofi and the Eagle*, which show a deep feeling for the gypsy culture.

Having lived and taught Chinese children in Singapore, she draws upon her experiences there and in Hong Kong for *The Day After Yesterday*. This is a finely drawn story capturing well the teeming bustle of Hong Kong, where families may live in such crowded familiarity whilst jealously guarding their secrets and "family honour". The story begins in London where ten-year-old Su Su's parents own a Chinese Take-Away (what else?). But the enigma of Su Su lives in a world of her own, haunted by foggy memories of her terrifying last weeks in Hong Kong, when she was left in sole charge of her younger brothers and baby sister, Chai Eng. All she can remember are four doors, with nothing beyond. But one day she is able to relive this last month in Hong Kong and relate her story to her English friend. She recalls how Chai disappeared and the children feared that she had been

sold as a mui-tsai or household slave. The children's search for their small sister and Su Su's determination in the face of frightening obstacles, make compelling reading in this often moving story. The atmosphere is charmingly captured in Glenys Ambrus's illustrations.

This is not a long story, but Geraldine Kaye manages to explore with great sensitivity the loyalties, obligations, fears and hopes within a Chinese family, as well as the heroism of children in the face of threat and difficulty.

Griselda Gifford in her earlier books for children, such as *Cus the Brave* and *Silver's Day* also showed considerable ability in writing for this middle age group. Her new book *Earwig and Beetle*, however, is disappointing. It is a rather pedestrian and old-fashioned school story, showing little of the acute observation apparent in some of her earlier books. Earwig and Beetle are the nicknames given to two new boys at a Boys' Preparatory School at the beginning of term. Jake (with prominent ears, hence Earwig) is very reluctant to go to Brightsea School, particularly as his parents have just separated and he is feeling confused and rebellious. The only other new boy, Aziz, with an unpronounceable African name, also hates school. After an initial mutual antagonism, the two boys, united in their nicknames, plot to disrupt the smooth-running of the school. Some of the schoolboy pranks are amusing, although the teachers and, in fact, the other boys, seem remarkably ineffectual in controlling these two tricky new boys. But the characterization generally is shallow, even the precocious Aziz is not totally convincing and the multicultural interest is minimal. Jake's parents, with their respective new "friends" of the opposite sex, seem figures of fun with no real strength of character, and the whole treatment of the separated parents theme could, I feel, have been developed more satisfactorily. Quite reasonably, there are no easy answers at the end of the story, but the author's attempt to explain how Jake comes to terms with his new life, is unconvincing.

Cosmic tales

By Josephine Karavasili

JOHN BAILEY, KENNETH McLEISH,
DAVID SPEARMAN (Editors)

Gods and Men
Myths and Legends from the World's Religions

Oxford University Press. £5.95.
0 19 274126 4

VAL BIRO:

Hungarian Folk Tales
Oxford University Press. £4.95.
0 19 274126 8

Whether Antipodean or African, Norse or Chinese, whichever the period and whatever the place, the joys and fears of the cosmos are seen to be common to all myths.

A collection can fall miserably by cantering blithely through "Myths of the World", but *Gods and Men* does not. Although the myths and legends are retold by three people, there is a coherence to the whole, for the editors share an ability for simple, direct prose which does not detract from the immensity of the subject or the particularity of place. The occasional strong graphic image, emotive word or prophetic change of tense, such as scenes into the soul as when, for example, the great rainbow snake of aboriginal Australia drags along, trying to rid itself of its agony, or Chinese Tseng dreams of the violence that will befall him if he does not curb his pride. Awe for the Gods is never lost even though they are brought within our understanding in such homely scenes as that of Atokio

sitting on a cloud playing with a ball of lightning.

Fortunately, too, the artists have been chosen and briefed with care. The illustrations never overwhelm the text, or attempt to show something which can be set forth much more powerfully in language. Instead, different cultural images are suggested by the fine work of Jerro Roy and Derek Collard, and Charles Keppel's pictures convey a sense of primeval power.

Val Biro's *Hungarian Folk Tales* brings an abrupt change of scale from Gods to People, from fearsome world-conquering dragons to a family of seven-headed dragons slitting down to a meal together. From questions of why and where, we move to the antics of poor men making good. Adversaries abound but the heroes easily overcome them by their cunning. This is a book of a very different kind and it would be wrong to let it suffer by comparison with *Gods and Men*.

It is merry from the outset, with crisp, colloquial sentences and fast-paced narrative full of recognizable folk-tale elements. The firestone-telling tone of the delivery suits the subject-matter well and the "word-of-mouth" tradition which Val Biro acknowledges in his introduction, together with his two major sources, is given further credence by his quiet dedication of the book to the memory of his mother. However, a larger typesize might have made the book more attractive and accessible to children, as would a greater use of diagonal spreads to enliven double-pages. As it stands, the book may well attract adults who want to read it aloud rather than children who want to read it for themselves.

Alternative universes

By Sarah Hayes

MONICA HUGHES:
The Guardian of Isis
Hamish Hamilton. £5.25.
0 241 10597 8

JOHN CHRISTOPHER:
Fireball
Gollancz. £4.95.
0 575 029749

CLARE COOPER:
The Black Horn
Hodder and Stoughton. £4.95.
0 340 25556 0

The creation of new worlds is fraught with temptation. Twin sins - lecturing and moralizing - lurk in readiness to trip the unwary writer, already high on omnipotence. Monica Hughes is neither teacher nor preacher, but she has tendencies in both directions, for the most part kept under control by the power of her invention.

The Guardian of Isis is dense with invention: animals, landscapes, customs, ideas, mythologies. The reader has to work hard to assimilate all there is to offer, too hard perhaps in the early chapters which establish a planetary community in the final stages of regression. Three generations on the planet Isis have seen a return from a technological society to primitive tribalism ruled by superstition and taboo.

Jody Nkomo is first glimpsed tinkering with a miniature water-wheel dismissed by the community as a toy. The settlers care only for hunting, keeping to the bounds of their valley, and appeasing the Guardian, a legendary figure of gold who warns the people of cosmic storms. To the President's fury it is Jody, the questioner, who finds the annual gift

from the Guardian, another incomprehensible sacred object. Jody recognizes the striped stick marked in red as a flood gauge and is sent out of the valley for his pains to seek help from the Shining One. Leaving the valley means encountering Thut Oh Woman, the death dealer.

The character of the story changes when Jody meets not death but the Guardian, a beautiful highly sophisticated robot, and his mistress, the fascinating Owen, once a woman now an alien adapted by the Guardian to suit the atmosphere of Isis. The pace slows, and emphasis is laid more on conversation and exposition than on detail and description. In a final burst of activity, Jody helps the Guardian to save the valley from flooding and returns to rebuild the future.

As a sequel to the remarkable *Keeper of the Isis Light*, this novel is disappointing, perhaps because it is intended as the transition section of a trilogy. The set of Monica Hughes's writing and her capacity for creating radiant worlds contrive, nevertheless, to weld the heterogeneous parts into an agreeable whole.

John Christopher is a splendid contrast to Monica Hughes: monochromatic, straight-forward, linear, spare, and neutral in tone where Mrs Hughes is many-coloured, discursive, lush, and emotional. Not a stranger to invention, John Christopher has eschewed the creation of new worlds and chosen to restructure the old one, using the science fiction device of the alternative universe.

A fireball sends Simon and his American cousin through time and space to a parallel England, a nation still ruled by Rome. Christianity is tolerated, but Roman Europe has evolved slowly without Islam or the Americas. The boys' arrival or the other world, are seen by the ambitious Bishop of London as a signal

from God for the start of a holy war. With the aid of newfangled stirrups and longhorns (fuelled by zeal and some luck) the Christians overthrow the two-thousand year empire of Rome, only to impose a regime every bit as repressive as before. The boys, now men, join various expeditions on board ship bound for the rediscovery of America....

John Christopher's ideas are intriguing in isolation - the "what would have happened if?" pattern appeals at any historical watershed. But by far the most vivid and readable episode in *Fireball* is that which describes the strictly Roman world of the gladiator school. Perhaps Mr Christopher could be persuaded to forget his split-level modern consciousness and produce a full-blooded historical novel next time.

The balance between the ordinary world and the extraordinary is a delicate one to manage. In her second novel for younger readers, Clare Cooper could do with some of Alan Garner's ability to conjure up menace in everyday surroundings. *The Black Horn* updates an ancient Welsh legend which tells of a unicorn imprisoned by wizardry. Short-sighted weedy Simon turns out to have inherited powers which enable him to free the unicorn and return it to the invisible isles. Simon's tutor, a Chinese restaurateur and cultivator of the Superior Man, is a spirited leader of the Good Squad. Sadly Evil does not have any stars, merely a bullying boy and an elderly gold-digger eager to get his hands on the unicorn's legendary jewel. The essence of a really tense good versus evil struggle set (as this book is) in the ordinary world, is that evil should be seen to be as much endemic as good is. In *The Black Horn* evil is merely an excrescence not an integral or logical part of its universe. Thus, despite efficient handling of dialogue and relationships, the story remains flawed.

Mappable zones

By Michael Trend

JOHN ROWE TOWNSEND:
The Islanders
Oxford University Press. £5.25.
0 19 271449 X

GRAHAM DUNSTAN MARTIN
Catchfire
Allen and Unwin. £4.95.
0 04 823184 3

John Rowe Townsend's *The Islanders* and Graham Dunstan Martin's *Catchfire* are both stories for teenagers that are set in worlds created by the imagination but still - in their very different ways - familiar enough to their readers. Such stories rely heavily on their ability to build a new world of substance and detail - a convincing history, a mappable geography, often a new cosmology - and they succeed best when the authors discipline themselves strictly to stick within the frame that they have set.

Judged by this criterion John Rowe Townsend's island of Halcyon is both a convincing creation and a useful vehicle for a good story. The island is set in what we may imagine is the South Atlantic, and is almost entirely cut off from, and forgotten by, the outside world. Halcyon is the home of a small, strict puritanical community which barely ekes out a living in appalling conditions. The Islanders are, broadly speaking, followers of the laws of their founder, the Deliverer, as expounded by the leader in the Meeting-House on Prayer Day. The Reader has had the laws passed down to him verbally because, like everybody else on Halcyon, he cannot read. The laws are very cruel with regard to incomers - would-be new arrivals; and when a group of native Islanders arrive from far, over the sea the whole basis of

the island's morality is put under question by a group of the inhabitants, the leading lights of which are children and young adults. The setting and the story of *The Islanders* are not utterly impossible to believe in and the points of similarity to and of difference from the contemporary world will surely intrigue young readers.

Graham Dunstan Martin's *Catchfire*, on the other hand, is set in an imaginary world that, at first sight, is very far from the world in which we live. We are here in the realm of magic and of witchcraft though this story also relies on juxtaposing the familiar with the unfamiliar in order to draw in the reader. The detail of the story is perhaps a little too baroque. The abundance of names is impressive evidence of an active imagination - Shrinkfold, Sneakfast, Slashbuckle, Starfall, Starhigh, Spy-law, Snarewood, Seaholt (I have restricted myself to the S's even though I am most reluctant to omit Withix and Mazewit). Many children will enjoy untangling the labyrinthine mythology and those who have read *Giftnish* (to which this book is a sequel) will doubtless be at an advantage. The basic plot is fairly clear: a terrible spell threatens the existence of Feydon; the young King of Kendark, Ewan, sets out to remedy the situation. But the elaboration of the plot - constant changes of location and time, the continual introduction of new characters (often ones with amazing powers) - unbalances the sense of coherence in this book. There are also some bizarre oddities in the course of the story: Starfall is described in one passage as a "Souless automaton" (dictionary definition, "Cafeteria in which meals etc are provided from slot machines; slot machine"). *Catchfire* does not completely convince as a unit; it fails to draw one entirely into a new world that is a mirror of the one that we know from our own lives, and it is here that *The Islanders* particularly succeeds.

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The treatment of seals is an emotive subject. John Cloudsley-Thompson, describing the life and practices of the various types of the genus, does not dodge the issues of culling and conservation, but he writes in a realistic fashion, neither over-sentimentalizing nor denying that "the seal's worst enemy is Man".

The clubbing of seal pups, notionally to protect fish stocks, and the general slaughtering for skins,

blubber or animal food, is a subject which will doubtless upset many young readers. The point is made, however, that more and more pet dogs mean fewer and fewer seals. "Everyone who keeps a dog and feeds it on tinned meat ought to know where that meat comes from". So one lesson among several is interwoven in a text which covers the evolution of pinnipedia, the way the modern species live and the wonders of migration. Photographs in good natural colours, add point to the account.

The photographs in *Gorillas*, another addition to the Animals of the World series, also merit special mention. Anthony Wootton sagely emphasizes that the gorilla, far from being the dangerous aggressive animal of fiction and film, is a mild-mannered, gentle creature, never attacking unless deliberately provoked. Another popular idea dispelled is that gorillas spend most of their time up in trees; in fact day-time searching for food and night-time sleeping is more likely to be on the ground. Their habits and habitat are intriguingly detailed in a most pleasant book.

The other two books, on gulls and rabbits, have a common pattern. The life cycle from chick or baby, through growth to maturity, mating and new birth is explained with a concise authority. Once again, the illustrations are outstanding, admirably complementing the text. The writing, too, is of a remarkably high standard, with an apt choice of voca-

bulary and a clear explanation of the day-to-day behaviour of the individual bird or animal, and its relationship to its surroundings and with other creatures. There are notes on observation techniques, and lists of books for further reading.

This new series of picture books comes from the British Museum (Natural History), and may be regarded as part of the activities commemorating the centenary of the establishment of the museum in South Kensington, London. The vicissitudes of the Natural History Museum, before and since its move from Bloomsbury, have made exciting reading in a number of recent volumes. It is obvious that the museum is not resting on its well-merited laurels, but intends to develop still further its aims of disseminating knowledge and of associating pleasure and enjoyment with learning about nature, with that word splendidly fits into all this. The books are written by members of the museum's staff and checked by its specialists; and the artists work in association with the staff.

The results are now to be seen and admired. If older generations shudder to find that thirty-two pages, even when printed to the highest standards and bound in good hard covers, cost almost £5, young readers with their different ideas of money values will be in no way deterred from acquiring the books. And they will be very lucky to have them.

A tale to tell

By Alan Brownjohn

BRIAN PATTEN (Editor):
Gangsters, Ghosts and Dragonflies
159pp. Allen & Unwin. £6.95.
0 04 8210536

In the realm of poetry anthologies for children bright new titles have been known to conceal dull old mixtures. Brian Patten's collection of story poems is named (and illustrated on its dust-jacket) in an eye-catching way, and it may not be literally and entirely about the three categories mentioned. But this is no false mask: the book offers an enterprising jumble of weird tales, scarcely any of them over-familiar, which manages never to be conventional or boring. The hope is that it may bridge a gap between the younger reader and the adult, and perhaps it is this which has led to a distinctly surreal and "adult" note in the fantasy poems chosen; alarm is always lurking round the corner in, for example, the ruthless rhymes of Dennis Lee or the harsh tones of Christopher Logue. But nearly all of the poems - almost all of which are at least fairly new - could be understood, some after a little fruitful puzzling, by older children without any special experience in the decoding of contemporary verse.

The poems which have become, deservedly, modest children's classics in their own way already, are easy to spot. Vernon Scannell's "Hide and Seek" and George MacBeth's "Bed-time Story" score with a sureness of content, timing and form which some of the new poems here do not have (the poet with the best story to tell and the best ear for putting it into verse that will be remembered, will produce the poems that survive). Alan Dixon's quatrains on the hunting of "The wild Yorkshire pudding"

More Stuff and Nonsense (Collins, £3.95, 0 00 184398 2) follows an earlier collection with the not totally unexpected title of *Stuff and Nonsense*, also edited by the compiler of this instalment, the Michael Dugan who subscribes to the belief enshrined in the couplet which stands as epigraph to this book: "Of nonsense and stuff / You can't have enough". I felt this to be an overstatement even before reading the book, which did little to alter my conviction.

The "stuff" is mainly that of a bestiary - fantastic animals needing only the slightest prompting to accommodate the most improvisatory and pointless "nonsense" which is, here, almost exclusively a species of pure whimsy, with only an occasional note of something grimmer or more robust ("When Billy set his aunt on fire / He squealed with great delight, / 'Look how auntie's burning, Dad, / It makes the room so bright..."). If the prevailing tone and temper have a disappointingly uniform air, the

are appealing, but may just miss it. We jump on a witch's cat; They shriek as we catch 'em; On cords which take twenty We string and attach 'em. They dry them in Bailey; They can them in likley. You will find they are served Where menus are stately.

This cheerful idea deserves infallible rhyming. But Libby Houston's "The Dragonfly" and "The Kitchen Girl's Task" are in turn factually absorbing about the insect, and intriguingly cryptic about the skivvy for whom the prince never came:

A demon took over Frank, chef at the café on the motorway; arms akimbo, as midnight clicks, he summons one of the girls, says:

I want you to count the tealeaves we've used here today and I'll wait for the right answer.

The prince could not wait, he left her... These are poems which not only will be picked up by other anthologists, but ought to be.

Brian Patten's fun choices give us John Lennon, Neil Innes, Adrian Henri and Roger McGough among others; and the acknowledged poets unmistakably rise above the rest. Ivor Cutler seems to be represented by less than his best; he can be both more mordant and more hilarious than this, and still (or more) suitable for children. The editor has chosen boldly from Stevie Smith and Ted Hughes (humans rather than animals), and discovered less-used poems by Pablo Neruda and Kenneth Patchen which provide both originality and a note of seriousness. Terry Oakes switches, in his illustrations, from a harsh cartoonist's line to a line in misty fantasy, but these black-and-white drawings complement a stimulating anthology of poems, rather than dominate it (as can happen) with obtrusive visual experiment.

actual forms have even more of one: there is barely any deviation from iambic tetrameter lines and abab quatrains. All of which gives the verse a curiously old-fashioned feel: Edward Lear, crossed with some rather less exacting talents. These, or so the notes on contributors tell us, are all Australian, though except for one "fair dinkum", they are so without a hint of Clive or Dame Edna. In only one instance is their note of vigorous absurdity struck: Wilbur G. Howcroft's "The Mugwump Bird":

He never plays, but sits for days (Each one the same as 'other); Alop a stump, one side his wump. His mug upon the other.

This said, the poems - and even more so the splendid drawings by Roland Harvey - will be enjoyed by all but the most demanding of young children beginning to "get the feel" of verse; though I can't help thinking that the simplest Robert Frost lyrics would hold more fascination for them.

Alan Jenkins

commentary

Elizabethan doublets

By Stanley Wells

Titus Andronicus
The Two Gentlemen of Verona
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford

Most readers and playgoers, asked to name Shakespeare's worst tragedy and comedy, would be likely to choose *Titus Andronicus* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Admittedly, both plays include fine poetry; both have strong dramatic situations; both display Shakespeare's emergent genius for characterization. In recent times, both have provoked eloquent critical defence in the face of earlier denigration and neglect. Appreciation of *Titus Andronicus* has been enhanced by discussion of its relationship to Ovid, of its Senecanism, of its place in the development of English tragedy. We have been taught to view the comedy more sympathetically by seeing it within the context of the Renaissance debate about the respective claims of friendship and love, and by examining its structure and its verbal counterpoint.

But difficulties remain, especially for the director who has the task of showing the plays at their best to audiences which must include many non-specialists. The horrors of *Titus Andronicus*, and the apparent disjunction between violent deeds and meditative verbal expression or response, require the most delicate handling: if they are not to seem crudely melodramatic, or absurd in their artifice. Characterization in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is so slight that actors must feel they are required to make bricks with little straw. One of the gentlemen behaves so badly, and the other is such an ass, that they seem undeserving of the sympathy demanded for them at the conclusion; and important moments are so underwritten as to defy credulity.

So it is a brave director who undertakes either play; and though the Royal Shakespeare Company acknowledges a duty to perform even Shakespeare's least popular plays from time to time, to present both of them in one evening might seem to be passing beyond valour into indiscretion. Fears that this might be so were not allayed by a late postponement of the press night, and a sudden substitution of the performer in the role of Crab.

In the event, it is to everyone's credit that the first night went as well as it did. John Barton has chosen to stress the plays' Elizabethanism, and their theatricality. The same actors play in both; those with a big part in one play have a small one in the other. There are suggestions of a group of touring players. A placard names both plays, in the opposite order to that in which they are performed; the programme, too, suggests that the comedy will precede the tragedy. In the manner of recent productions here and elsewhere, the playing area is greatly reduced; it is defined by coat-racks bearing costumes and a make-up mirror. Five property baskets which can be variously re-arranged and, to stage left, a scaffolding that can serve as an upper level, for Titus's study "above", or Silvia's tower. A great net swings down to bring the heavens forward, too. Before the performance begins, actors fraternize with the audience in a mode that is in danger of becoming modish.

The title of each play is declaimed, as are opening stage directions - perhaps to make sure we know which play is which, perhaps to sustain our consciousness of theatricality. The actors are visible throughout; concluding a scene, they retreat into the background and watch the action seriously and sympathetically. In the tragedy, the device has a controlling effect on our emotions; Lavinia, carried off unconscious to be raped on her husband's corpse, develops into the actress in the midstage shadows.

If the performers are members of a touring company, Barton must be thought to have cast himself as their manager, one who, like his Elizabethan counterparts, has no scruples about altering the text. Like them, he is short of actors; no extras are available for crowd scenes. We stand in for the Roman populace (as, the text hints, Shakespeare may have meant his audience to do, too); the visible presence of the "resting" members of the company pleasantly peoples the stage in scenes which might otherwise have seemed too sparsely populated - though it is arguable that in the tragedy, at least, austerity would have been more fitting. Costumes are splendid; property trees are used to good effect; hobby-horses, if a little quaint, imaginatively suggest journeys; skilful lighting contributes to the constantly pleasing stage pictures.

Barton's way with the text here is not that of his Ciceronian adaptations of *Henry VI* and *King John*. He has boiled down but not fudged up. Cuts are extensive - 850 lines of *Titus*, 515 of *The Two Gentlemen* - but they are mostly "internal", within speeches. Before getting too hot under the collar about them, we may do well to recall that the only production of *Titus* to have set the Avon on fire - Peter Brook's, with Laurence Olivier as Titus, in 1955 - used an adapted text from which over 650 lines had been excised.

All the same, the omissions are more damaging to the tragedy than to the comedy. Amplification is an essential rhetorical device in *Titus Andronicus*; to reduce it overemphasizes the action, detracts from its steady-paced grandeur, its sombre mediocrity. In general, Barton compensates for the conscious theatricality of his setting with naturalism in the acting, rather than aiming at the formal, emblematic stylization which has worked best in earlier productions. Admittedly, it is a naturalism which can encompass rhetoric, even rant. Bernard Lloyd's genteel Saturnine begins with a vehemence that at first I thought was intended as a caricature of those who

would tear a passion to tatters, but develops into a psychological study of self-indulgent, hysterical, fundamentally insecure tyranny. Sheila Hancock complements this with her tight-lipped, gloatingly malevolent Tamora.

The method is epitomized in Patrick Stewart's Titus. Grizzled, moustached, worn, bald, and carrying a stick, he is entirely credible as an old soldier, less so as a candidate for the imperial throne. Yet he rises with real power to the rhetoric of suffering; the performance is intelligently sustained, despite a tendency to the monotonous. It is fine that he responds to the role's demands for overly expressive acting, but a touch more inwardness, even if achieved by understatement, would not come amiss.

The horrors are not shirked, though Hugh Quarshie's Aaron, while avoiding caricature, lacks demonic edge. Chiron (Colin Tennant) and Demetrius (Roger Allam) convince us of their sadistic lust, knocking Lavinia unconscious on Chiron's words "I'll stop your mouth!". After their attack on her, Leonie Mellinger's Lavinia, "her hands cut off, and her tongue cut out, and ravished", is a pathetically pop-eyed, compulsively shuddering figure. As in Trevor Nunn's 1972 production, I found most affecting the tableaux of grief which in the reading seem most artificial. Playing Lavinia's uncle, Marcus, Ray Jewers makes a deep impression with his quiet, stunned delivery of his elegantly descriptive speeches. Moving, too, is the coming together in suffering of the mutilated father and daughter, culminating in her acceptance of his killing her by dislocating her neck. The final holocaust leaves us appalled rather than moved; like the few surviving characters, we have suffered full with horrors.

After the interval, the comedy, Nick Blyth's brazen flourishes and harsh, percussive fanfares give way to lyrical measures on woodwind and plucked strings. Christopher Morley's setting, essentially unchanged, adapts well to the new mood. The production is modest, charming, and sensitive to the play's weaknesses. The gentlemen, for once, seem really

young, so are more easily forgiven. Peter Land plays an initially soppy Proteus, but finds a way to convey shame and bewilderment at the unexpected shift in his emotions. Peter Chelmon's engaging Valentine, full of boyish charm and innocence, youthfully pleased with himself, has the right mixture of comedy and romance, and develops into the most interesting character. The moment of his banishment, when he kneels to John Franklyn-Robbins's entertaining, strongly characterized Emperor, introduces a new dimension of seriousness; in the final scene, the genuineness of his concern for both Silvia and Proteus carries us surprisingly well through the notoriously difficult dénouement.

If we are less involved with the objects of the gentlemen's affections, it is because Diana Hardcastle's cold Silvia seems well able to look after herself, while Julia Swift is unsympathetically hysenish in Julia's earlier scenes, and too stridently emotional in her later ones. Geoffrey Hutchings's Lance seems infected with the sourness of which he complains in his dog, but makes a good foil to the wholly delightful Speed of Joseph Marcell, who conveys a natural warmth and ebullience which illuminatingly humanize the often dry wordplay. Not much is to be done with the outlaws, but to have one of them played, by Sheila Hancock, as a sex-starved woman who takes a fancy to Valentine, only to find that he bears an honourable mind/And will not use a woman lawlessly", creates innocent if irrelevant diversion.

Double bills have an honourable history. The Greeks had their satyr plays, the Elizabethans their jigs, the Victorians their farcical afterpieces. This Stratford evening lacks the elements of complete contrast, the suggestion of a necessary escape from serious seriousness into frivolity, characteristic of most earlier examples. Nor does juxtaposition of the two plays cast unexpected illumination upon either. But the evening works well as a celebration of the varied talents of the dramatist and his performers; and you do get two plays - or most of two plays - for the price of one.

fiercely opposed to the burgeoning materialism of the German middle classes.

This development from farce to vituperative melodrama is skilfully reflected in Wallace Hcm's sets for the three plays, shifting from a naturalistic domestic interior to an impressionistic salon and finally to the lugubrious apocalyptic decor of the baron's house. The company of seven is used to versatile effect, especially Anthony Head in the contrasting roles of the aristocratic aesthete and the intense secretary. John Abbott sustains the three taxing central roles and convincingly effects the transformation from plausible petit-bourgeois to social climber and then to mummified baron.

The last two parts of the trilogy come as something of a anti-climax after the satirical humour and tight construction of *Die Hoss*. This is not necessarily a fault of the production. Sternheim's vision of pre-war Germany became increasingly bleak (the trilogy was written between 1910-14), a change reflected in the sombre development of the plays.

Eric Bentley's translation has worn well. It is good to see a theatre capitalizing on his pioneering work in bringing German dramatists of the early twentieth century to the attention of an English audience. *Mask*, continues the Gate's laudable policy of reviving neglected foreign plays and Sternheim's trilogy deserved to be rediscovered.

Social mobility

By S. N. Plaice

Mask: Scenes from the Herole
Life of the Middle Classes
Gate Theatre, Notting Hill

Lou Stein's ambitious adaptation of Carl Sternheim's trilogy of plays, charting the rise of three generations of the Maske family in the years preceding the First World War, is faithful to the German dramatist's policy of interrupting his social satire with static, Expressionist images that lodge in the memory by virtue of their incongruity with the general comic tone.

The young wife of a minor civil servant loses her knickers while straining to watch the Kaiser's procession in the Zoological Gardens in Berlin. The first play *Die Hoss* (mythically translated as *The Underpants*) opens with a frozen image of her husband Theobald in the act of beating her for her carelessness, which may cost him his job and social standing. But from this Expressionist opening, the tone switches, immediately into domestic farce. Two infatuated admirers, witnesses of the scandalous event, enter the house as lodgers. The result is a familiar succession of opening and closing doors and attempted seductions.

In the second play, *The Snob*, Christian Maske, who is insinuating

his way into the aristocracy, continues the tradition of "inconspicuous uniformity" established by his father Theobald. But in order to rid himself of the embarrassment of his peevish bourgeois background, he is now forced to buy off both his vulgar father and the mistress who has introduced him into high society. A weaker farce ensues when Christian seeks to screen his father from Count Palen, whose daughter he wishes to marry. At the end of the play, Christian retells the story of his mother's knickers, romanticizing it for his own ends and transforming the lodgers into the painter Renoir and a French viscount, in order to convince his wife that he is in fact the viscount's bastard son.

In the final play, simply entitled 1913, all the earlier elements of farce have disappeared, to be replaced by stark Expressionist melodrama (Sternheim called it a "Schauspiel", rather than a "Komödie"). Christian Maske is now an enormously rich, aged baron confined to a wheel-chair and very close to death. His two younger children have been spoiled by his wealth and have degenerated into a "leekish" farce of roller-skating debutante. Christian is involved in a bitter struggle with his eldest daughter Sophie, who is trying to wrest his financial power from him. The family is consumed by rivalry, and the atmosphere of the house is further divided by the clandestine Socialist activities of Christian's secretary Key, a classic Expressionist figure.

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Edited by Donald Davie

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THE OLD NURSERY STORIES

E. Nesbitt
These retellings of such well-known fairy stories as *Cinderella*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *The Sleeping Beauty* have a freshness, wit and charm that will endear them to all children.
Age: 7-10 years

commentary

The selection collection

By Redmond O'Hanlon

Origin of Species
Natural History Museum

In a massive permanent exhibition designed to celebrate its centenary, the British Museum (Natural History) has exercised a hundred years of experience in educational display with characteristic virtuosity. On the upper floor, opposite a case full of the simplest and most elegant of all natural selections, the big cuts, a short corridor admits the visitor into a light, high-ceilinged and richly carpeted gallery now transformed into a fairground: there are red metallic tents in which one may decimate whole populations of disadvantaged dark mice on television screens; wooden igloos where films, animated cartoons, philosophical chat shows and audio-visual displays run constantly; whole amusement arcades of ingenious question-and-answer machines; and walls of more conventional exhibits which wind amongst Alfred Waterhouse's original and splendid columns, themselves decorated with all manner of whimsical beasts.

Towering panelled collages of photographs, with representative real specimens from the greatest natural history collections in the world, visually state the initial problem. How did this overwhelming variety of animals and plants, from the unicellular organism to the ciliated worm on the ocean floor, to the hooded cobra or the Sumatran tiger, come to be as it is? The extraordinary forms and personal vices of an Indian pangolin, like a monstrously purposeful fir cone; a hairy tree porcupine; a beaver offering his paddle for your speculation; a Bateleur Eagle, savagely regarding us over his shoulder; and an impassive Eagle Owl outstaring every admiring eye—all these silently ask us to choose between natural theology and natural selection. And, just in case such an assemblage is altogether too exotic, an English kestrel hovers in the windless space above our heads, while two male shovellers fly curving into, but never quite reach, an English lake somewhere to our right.

Across this wealth of images two legends are inscribed. Above a black and white picture of a puffin, whose great beak is nevertheless plainly in its full breeding colour, is the legend: "One view is... all living things have developed by a process of gradual change over a very long period of time. This is what we mean by evolution." To the right, above an anxious young man who is presumably off to a fundamentalist graduate school in Alabama, we are reminded: "Another view is... God created all living things perfect and unchanging. He created each one for a special purpose. This is the basis of the doctrine of Creation." But here, in the extreme left hand corner, there rises the quizzical and subversive head of the Stinkhorn *Phallus impudicus*, complete with a fly at its tip.

At the start of the exhibition proper, an aged Charles Darwin sits reading in his study at Down House, a life-size photographic enlargement of one corner of which appropriately shows us the serrated ranks of specially carpentered pigeon holes in which he placed his loose sheaves of notes under various headings. The rest of the exhibition brings the early contents of these seemingly innocuous wooden files to life and invites us to take the simplest possible walk through the great man's complex preoccupations.

We begin, like Darwin, by contemplating the dog lying at our fireside. Domestic, artificial selection of prized characteristics has certainly produced dramatic changes. Mate a mere terrier with Atroz Frederick the Great (a preserved three-year-old bulldog presented to the museum in 1979 by Mr George Wallace) and looking as if he, personally, would prefer to amputate your leg rather than suffer such an indignity), suitably interbreed his

offspring for several generations, and you would eventually produce a Staffordshire Bull Terrier. But differences may also be relatively subtle. A chunky proto-sausage dog of 1875 is still obviously akin to the low level frankfurter dachshund of 1975.

So how are species made in wilder nature? Once again we are asked to look first at the immediate and familiar, the garden pond and its water boatmen; the weaselly distinguished and stonily different family of the *Mustelidae*; the onions, leeks, garlic and chives of our vegetable garden; and, just to prove that it is not a wholly academic matter, a few False Blushers and Fly Agnises and the odd Death Cap. And then, by way of demonstrating that specific difference may be indicated by other means, music is provided for the entire exhibition by the specific songs of otherwise almost identical looking (and equally tireless) chaff chaffs and willow warblers.

Unpleasant necessities like death and competition of one kind or another are cheerily illustrated with a cartoon of the Serengeti, trunk to tail with elephants. The consequent struggle is depicted with the help of a rabbit, very snug, in its cut-away burrow in the English chalk downland, temporarily unaware of the Common blue, the Small tortoise-shell, the Woodmouse, the Roman snail and the outsize, award-winning, impossibly shiny British Museum (Natural History) woodlice above its head. A very perky male rabbit appears to be finding the battle for food, for space in suitable surroundings, and for young brown-eyed females entirely to his taste.

As Darwin wrote, "our ignorance of the laws of variation is profound." But this is less profound than it was in 1859, and Darwin would probably have given a good twenty years' supply of snuff (his one discernible vice) for a chance to play a Mendelian game with the coat colour of short-horn cattle; to study the modern implications of the inheritance of haemophilia amongst Queen Victoria's descendants; to add the genetic relationship between resistance to malaria and the possession of sickle cell anaemia to the huge amount of intricate accumulated evidence with which he held up his initial, simple idea.

He would have been delighted, too, with the more familiar, less mathematical demonstration of the varying fortunes of two different forms of the Peppered moth (a soot-coloured mutant, first spotted in Manchester in 1848, is now dominant in industrial areas); with the astonishing series of Darnall butterflies illustrating Batesian mimicry; and with the dramatic new research by the Museum's own scientists into the possible mechanisms which produced the two hundred distinct but similar species of cichlid fishes in Lake Victoria in East Africa, a process directly analogous to the effects of isolation on small populations of Darwin's Galapagos finches, whose evolving beaks are here celebrated with an accompanying array of nutcrackers, tweezers and pliers.

This is a brilliantly selected and organized exhibition, well supported with its own small book, *Origin of Species*, jointly published by the Museum and Cambridge University Press (£12 hardback 0 521 23878 1, £3.95 paperback 0 521 28276 4).



Heartbeats in the void

By Brian Powell

Iroha: Life of Change
Court Theatre, Holland Park

Percussion is part of Japanese life. Away from the pop music blaring from the loudspeakers of the urban pin-ball parlours, the sounds in the environment of the Japanese are mainly rhythmic and monotonous rather than melodic. The festival—and religious festivals are the only holidays in the pre-modern period were attended by all the local population—uses only the drum or the bell. The no drama, which was popular entertainment at festivals, sets its music to three drums and a flute. In kabuki the progress of the performance is marked by one set of clappers, while the dramatic climaxes are accentuated by another. There is virtually no dawn chorus in Japan, and the Westerner misses it. In the heat of the day there is the unintermitted chatter of the cicadas instead, and the Japanese misses that here. It was in Japan that someone had the idea of mass-producing tapes of human heartbeats to soothe fretful babies.

Given this, it is not surprising that Japan has produced one of the world's greatest percussionists and exponents of percussion-based drama, Stomu Yamashita. The percussion of *Iroha*, Yamashita's recent production at the Court Theatre in Holland Park, could only have come from him. The sonorous temple bell was there, the cicadas, the human heart, the clappers, all fused into a rather less varied whole than in the past, but unique none the less. One missed the richness of instrumentation of *The Man from the East*, but Yamashita has not lost his capacity to create chord and percussion combinations that one feels cannot conceivably be improved upon.

The title Yamashita chose for his

new show is given the English subtitle, *Life of Change*. *I-ro-ha* are the first three syllables of a poem which contains all the forty-seven elements of the Japanese phonetic syllabary. The poem itself, Buddhist in inspiration, stresses the transience of life and urges the reader to free himself from the physical world and its vicissitudes by overcoming its temptations and uniting with the absolute. *Iroha* portrays in dance form the struggle between the Buddhist forces of good and evil. A succession of male and female characters then enters one by one, and each acts out the crisis in his or her life. In front sits a priest, shaking the beads of his rosary, chanting his sutras and practicing exorcism by fire. Green laser beams flicker overhead, spotlights from the stage and clouds of artificial smoke billow upwards. The priest is equal to the power of evil and steadfast in the face of its attacks. His novice, however, has not reached that plane of serenity and through the performance his dancing symbolizes his own personal struggle and the severity of Buddhist discipline. Perhaps Yamashita is showing us some of the trials which he himself experienced during his recent retreats.

Traditional elements are plentiful. The performing area, with its large central stage and passageways leading off to right and left, is modelled on the temple where *Iroha* was first performed, and the small pine trees planted at intervals in front of the passageways suggest the no theatre. No was the drama form most closely associated with Buddhism, especially Zazen, and Yamashita has used many of its external features. He may have gone further than this. The programme and publicity mention bugaku and a famous fire festival, but much of *Iroha* is reminiscent of the no drama *Aoi no Ue*. This play, highly dramatic even in the refined style of private performance that developed in the early fifteenth century, has a climactic dance scene of exorcism.

On the stage lies a kimono symbolizing a young woman near to death through evil possession. Around her, in a hideous mask, dances the jealous spirit of the lady who has been forsaken for her. The spirit is quelled by a priest plying his rosary and intoning spells.

Which is more dramatic is hard to say. In neither case do the words matter. The words of the priest's chant in the no play are unintelligible to most and in *Iroha*, as in *The Man from the East*, Yamashita himself uses a language that is near Japanese but not understandable as such. As a spectator it is difficult to become involved with what one is seeing and hearing on a no stage. One's experience of Stomu Yamashita, however, leads one to have quite different expectations. In the past he has taken themes that concern everybody and set our ears and minds ringing with their implications. The Hiroshima sequence of *The Man from the East* was quite terrifying. Salvation and damnation and the hopes and fears of mankind concern us no less, and one expects to come changed from seeing Yamashita's presentation of them. But he keeps us at arm's length in *Iroha*. The straight rows of seats are well back from the stage. The loudspeakers are all in front of us. Festivals in Japan are participatory, but we were not allowed to participate in this one. Yamashita's music has moved people profoundly before, and perhaps we could have hoped that, even if only for a moment, we could feel our spirits leap away to the void.

Yamashita disappointed us. The Court Theatre and the green lasers for there to be much scope for our spirits. I came away from *Iroha* feeling that I had simply been watching a show, and hoping that Yamashita would next time succeed once again in combining the Japanese and Western experience to shake his audience's consciousness.

Commentary continues on page 1083.

Among this week's contributors

LOUIS ALLEN is a lecturer in French at the University of Durham.

GEOFFREY BEST's most recent book is *Humanity in Warfare*, 1980. He is working on a book on war and society in revolutionary Europe.

NICHOLAS BEST's novel *Where Were You at Waterloo?* will be published shortly.

JEREMY CATTO is a Fellow of Oriol College, Oxford.

RICHARD COMBS is editor of The British Film Institute's *Monthly Film Bulletin*.

PATRICIA CRAIG's critical study, *The Lady Investigates: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction*, a collaboration with Mary Cadogan, was published earlier this year.

NICHOLAS DAVIDSON is a lecturer in History at the University of Leicester.

ROY FOSTER's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* will be published later this year.

CHRISTOPHER HILL was Master of Balliol College, Oxford from 1965 to 1978. His books include *The World Turned Upside Down*, 1972, and *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution*, 1980.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON is Professor of French History at University College London. His books include *A Concise History of France*, 1970.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* will be published next year.

JAMES KIRKUP teaches Comparative Literature at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. His recent books include *Dengonban Messages: One-line Poems*, 1981.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

HERMIONE LEE's *Elizabeth Bowen: An Estimation* will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the TLS.

MARY LUTYENS's books include *Milady and the Rains*, 1976, *Krishnamurti*, 1975, and a recent memoir of her father, Edwin Lutyens.

HELEN McNEIL is a lecturer in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

RICHARD MAYNE's books include *The Recovery of Europe*, 1970, and a translation of Jean Monnet's *Memoirs*, 1978.

VENETIA NEWALL's books include *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Magic*, 1974. She is the editor of *International Folklore Review*.

S. N. PLAICHT's latest translation is of Tankred Dorst's *Merlin*.

BRIAN POWELL is a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. He is writing a book on the modern Japanese playwright, Mayama Seika.

BRYAN RANFT was Professor of History at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, from 1966 to 1977.

DAVID RIDGWAY is joint editor of *Italy Before the Romans*, 1979.

MICHAEL ROAF is Assistant Director of the British Archaeological Expedition to Iran and a Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford.

PAT ROGERS's books include *The Augustan Vision*, 1974, and *Henry Fielding*, 1979.

JOHN REGISTER is lecturer in Modern History at Durham University and editor of the new journal *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*.

K. G. ROBBINS's books include *The Abolition of War*, 1974.

VERNON SCANNELL's *New and Collected Poems 1950-1980* was published last year.

PETER STEAD is a lecturer in History at University College of Swansea.

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A. J. P. TAYLOR's recent books include *Revolutions and Revolutionaries and Historians, Socialists and Politicians*, both 1980.

JULIAN TREUHERZ is Keeper of Fine Art at Manchester City Art Gallery.

J. B. TRAPP edited *The Apology of Sir Thomas More*, 1979.

GILLIAN TINDALL's most recent novel is *The Intruder*, 1979.

JEREMY WALDRON is a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

J. F. WATKINS is Professor of Medical Microbiology at the Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff.

STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare.

STANLEY WHITFIELD's most recent book is *The London Yankees*, 1979.

The Historical Novel

Sir, — It was a pleasant surprise to see half a page of the TLS (August 28) devoted to that neglected (if marketable) commodity, the historical novel, but a disappointment to find Robert Hewison's approach so negative. After conceding that in a cold climate for the modern novel there is still profit in historical ones, he devotes most of his review to such destructive criticism of the genre in general and his nine subjects in particular that one ends by wondering why the vulgar things sell at all.

Mr Hewison has some very odd views about the historical novel. According to him, they are always historically inaccurate, and should therefore properly be called history-novels. I only know two of the authors he reviews, but I would defy him to find a major inaccuracy in Jean Stubbs or C. Northcote Parkinson. Too much, rather than too little history is often the failing of the modern historical novel, which, I suppose, is what Mr Hewison means when he says that "history removes the need for invention, so the narrator can concentrate on inventions".

But why does history remove the need for invention? Having, interestingly, conceded that it is possible to place any modern fictional genre in a historical setting, Mr Hewison goes on to the amazing conclusion that that setting somehow entails an entire absence of character, plot and style. I would have said that the strength (and success) of the historical novel lay exactly in the fact that whereas plot is a dirty word in the context of the modern novel, it is an allowable virtue in historical ones. The stress between historical time and characters' time, between background and plot, is one of the fruitful problems of these books. I suppose *War and Peace* is the classic example of this. And would Mr Hewison really argue that there is no character in *War and Peace*? Or in *Henry Esmond*? Or in *The Birds Fall Down*? Or in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*?

Coming back, later, to plot, Mr Hewison admits that a hero and a heroine are necessary evils of the historical novel, and often achieve a happy (or fairy-story) ending. Has he not, perhaps, put his finger here on the answer to a question posed earlier in his article? What satisfactions, he asked, are there in writing or reading the things? Well, one of the satisfactions is the achievement of a happy ending. This has become almost impossible in a modern novel, except in the saccharine (if significantly successful) terms of Mills and Boon. But there are, in fact, happy moments in people's lives. By focusing on one of these, a happy ending becomes possible. By setting it in the past, it becomes believable. I expect Figaro's Count got into Susanna's bed pretty soon after the marriage, but that is neither here nor there in the opera. Jane Austen summed up the happy-ending problem in *Persuasion* when she described the happiness of Anne and Captain Wentworth: "His profession was all that could ever make her friends wish [her] tenderness less; the dread of a future war, all that could dim her sunshine." But, for the moment, they were happy.

Humanity cannot bear very much reality. Books on the royal wedding are still selling like ice cream in August. If the historical novel can make happy endings respectable, good for it. If the reader picks up a little history *en passant*, so much the better. One of Mr Hewison's criticisms is that "the sourcebook is unlikely to challenge conventional historical judgments". It is hardly his job, surely? And, oddly enough, when one of the authors under review does take a mildly idiosyncratic line, Mr Hewison at once accuses him of using twentieth-century devices, as, for instance, the outsider as hero, or the liberated woman as heroine. Twentieth-

century? They are surely as old as the novel.

Concern for style, according to him, is "rigidly excluded by the demands of naturalism". Why? One of the difficult pleasures of writing historical novels is trying to achieve a language, both in narrative and in dialogue, that will suggest the historical period without alienating, or, worse still, boring the reader. Mr Renault and Georgette Heyer both succeed superbly at this in their very different ways.

Mr Hewison comes at last to the only one of the novels that he seems to have managed to enjoy at all. It is *Long Day at Shiloh*, which, he says, has no hero and no plot, but a great deal of style: "The invented dialogue with its onomatopoeic spelling brings the material alive". It sounds remarkably like a modern novel. Perhaps Mr Hewison would be happier, and more constructive, reviewing those.

JANE AIKEN HODGE,
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Poetry and Esperanto

Sir, — George Szirtes's suggestion of an analogy for the joint effort of Octavio Paz and Charles Tomlinson (September 4) is perceptive — more so to the potentialities of Esperanto than his achievements, which can hardly compare with those of either poet. The quoted lines indeed translate readily:

Domo farita de memor' el si,
temp-interpore blanka — pli pensite
de vive, pli ditita de penalo,
domo daŭra dum la propra son'...

But I agree that Montale is better.

KRIS LONG,
85 Point Royal, Bracknell, Berks.

Sir, — As a poet whose language is Esperanto I take serious exception to George Szirtes's sentence (September 4): "But in tackling archetypal themes they have committed themselves to a kind of poetic Esperanto". This is plainly intended to be derogatory, as witness the word "archetypes" in the following sentence. "A kind of poetic Esperanto", indeed! he means, I suppose, a kind of unpoetic English. It is obvious your reviewer has never read any Esperanto poetry, which makes his comment intellectually and morally dishonest, and until he has read some of our best poets he should desist from making such judgments.

W. AULD,
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The 'Athenian Society'

Sir, — In his review of A. B. England's *Energy and Order in the Poetry of Swift* (September 4) Claude Rawson feels that Swift's "Ode to the Athenian Society" contains lines "which can be suspected of some element of mockery of the Athenian Society itself, though its main drift is eulogistic". This may reflect Swift's own embarrassment for his wholehearted approval of the Society in the Ode, when he learned that the men he had praised so highly were hacks. Swift was certainly fervent in his admiration of the Society, even if his admiration was short-lived: not only did he sign and date his poem (a very rare occurrence), but he wrote to his cousin Thomas Swift that as a result of the poem's acceptance "I was in a good humor all the week." He then added that he felt poets could not write well "except they think the subject deserves it" (*Correspondence*, 1.8).

It seems unlikely that even a hint of satire directed at the Athenians is present in the Ode.

HENRY MERRITT,
21 Cyprus Road, Cambridge.

Translating Kopelev

Sir, — In his review of Lev Kopelev's *The Education of a True Believer* (July 31), Michael Scammell condemns my translation with one sentence: "Unfortunately, the book is afflicted with a translation of such grotesque and egregious incompetence that only by a miracle does anything of the original survive at all". Mr Scammell continues: "Yet readers who persist with it will find their efforts rewarded, especially in the concluding chapters..."

Already Mr Scammell undercuts his criticism, for if my translation were such a monstrosity, further reading could hardly reward readers' efforts. A translation that bad cannot, and should not, be read.

Permit me to say something about the book not mentioned in the review. Its author, Lev Kopelev, is a polyglot who provides generous samples of the languages in his cultural formation. Thus the book, *I sovetskie seme knuziri*, is written not only in Russian, but also in Ukrainian, Polish, German and Yiddish: one chapter is even devoted to Esperanto. There are, in addition, Biblical quotations, Soviet acronyms, poems and a variety of names in Cyrillic letters, all of which pose problems for the translator. It is to be expected that I would commit errors, as any human being must (I corrected the author's errors in Esperanto and Biblical quotations, for example), and likewise it is inevitable that some readers would not agree with my solutions. In a previous review, Hugh McLennan remarks that the translator "faced formidable problems: passages rife with colloquialisms, slang and even foreign languages — German, Polish and especially Ukrainian. How is a poor translator to reproduce the effect of Ukrainian passages in a Russian text? Mr Kern clears some of his hurdles brilliantly. But he seems to have worked in haste, and there are far too many slips and misunderstandings" (*New York Times Book Review*, August 31, 1980). Unlike Mr Scammell, Professor McLennan lists some of my mistakes, which are admittedly embarrassing, but he certainly does not brand my work as grotesque and egregiously incompetent.

Of course, it is impossible to prove one's professional competence in a letter to the editor, just as it is difficult to fight against the charge of insanity. To cite my credentials, my education and previous translations, would appear pretentious, while to point out the shortcomings of Mr Scammell's review would be petty and vindictive. Above all, to enter into a detailed defence of the translation would bore everybody. There is nothing to be done, neither for me nor for anyone else, except to wait for the last word. Suffice it to say that should Mr Scammell care to prove any grotesque and egregious incompetence, I would appreciate the opportunity to respond. In the meantime, I must take solace in the approval of my work by other readers, who include the author.

Finally, to indicate that something of the original does survive in my translation, whether by accident or "miracle", I offer a short passage. (More complicated passages, employing foreign words, are too long for this letter.) Kopelev speaks of his yearning for an international union of brotherly love:

V yunosti ya veril, cho etia nadezhda perevoptolias' v pryziv: "Proletari vskhi stran, soedinyatesi!" Pozdnee ubedilysya, cho ona zhivet i vo mnogikh drugikh vostochno-chenyaykhi. I vsogo yavstvennoe dlya menya begodaya: v pushkinskoi rechi Dostoyevskogo — "dyo znachit byt' vshchelovekom".

My translation:

In youth I believed that his hope had taken flesh in the call: "Workers of the world, unite!" Later, I became convinced that La-

lived as well in many other embodiments. And for me today it sounds most clearly in the Pushkin speech of Dostoevsky: "To be really a Russian — this means to be a vshchelovek, a universal man".

GARY KERN,
545 Highlander Drive, Riverside, California 92507.

The United Irishmen

Sir, — Pádraig Ó Snodaigh's reference (Letters, August 28) to the number of United Irishmen in County Carlow in 1798 would appear to require some clarification. He cites figures to indicate that between 11,000 and 14,000 of the total population (men, women and children) of 44,000 were United Irishmen. Assuming males and females were about evenly distributed in the population before industrialization, famine and emigration intervened to upset demographic patterns, and that both young, children (under fifteen) and old folks would have represented about 40 per cent of all persons, one would arrive at something like 13,000 adult males able, though not necessarily willing, to give allegiance to the cause of the United Irishmen. That every Tom, Dick and Seamus ("between 11,000 and 14,000") should have done so seems wildly improbable.

JOSEPH O'BRIEN,
28 Argyle Lane, East Hampton, NY.

Sir Gawain and The Green Knight

Sir, — One does not lightly disagree with a scholar and critic who discourses as subtly as Professor T. A. Shippey, but I cannot accept his assertion, in his review of Humphrey Carpenter's edition of *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (August 28), that Sir Gawain, when the lady of the castle offers herself to him in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, "never feels the temptation of lust at all". and that "if he had, neither he nor the poet, nor Tolkien as editor, would have mentioned it". To say that the poet does not mention it requires one to suppose that there is nothing libidinous about the "wigt wallande joye" (ardently upwelling joy) which the poet tells us warned Gawain's heart (line 1762) at the sight of the lady in her beautiful and revealing attire. Besides, the poet goes on to say (lines 1768-9) that "Gret perile biwene hem stod / Ni Maré of hir knygt mynne" (Great danger would have been present between them if the Virgin Mary had not taken thought for her knight), and these words are also hard to reconcile with a reading of the poem which makes Gawain immune to the temptation of lust. In an unforced reading they speak of temptation resisted, and it seems a dubious compliment to Tolkien to suggest that he read them as referring to temptation never felt.

Such a reading, in my opinion, would also do injustice to the poet's mastery of plot and characterization and his grasp of his theme. Of course the real issue is never whether Gawain will commit carnal sin, but Gawain is made to think so, and the reader or hearer is made to think so, up to the very moment when the surprise is sprung. Gawain is up against an adversary who knows how to make him concentrate his attention on the wrong object: if a mere practitioner of legerdemain is skilled at this, how immeasurably more so must an authentic magician be! If we may apply terms of secular warfare to Gawain's psychomachia, the adversary's use of carnal temptation is a feint. To be effective, however, a feint must present itself to the attacked party as a serious threat, engrossing his attention and powers of resistance so that he is unable to counter the real threat from another quarter. So it is with Gawain. Intent on

his successful resistance to carnal temptation, he offers no resistance to the spiritual temptation, and indeed does not even recognize that his grave spiritual sin of cowardice and covetousness (lines 2369-86) is anything but a normal act of self-preservation (lines 1855-8). He shows us this unawareness by making what can only be an incomplete confession to his host's chapel priest (line 1876-84) — the poet's assurance that this was a complete confession must be taken as irony, for how can anyone "be pardoned and retain the offence?" — and by seeing no inconsistency between his repeated protestation that his trust is in God (lines 2138-9, 2158-9) and the fact that his trust is really in the green girdle (line 2040). It is only after the Green Knight shows him that the green girdle does not make him invulnerable, and tells him that his wound was the punishment for his breach of faith, that Gawain's eyes are opened. He then performs the act of *contrition* (lines 2369-86) that was obviously missing in his earlier confession (lines 1876-84), and receives what must be *valid* absolution from the Green Knight (lines 2389-94).

By this reading the Green Knight is one of the most enigmatic figures in all literature, playing the part of the very devil himself in Gawain's psychomachia but acting as a priest and as the agent of God's purposes at the Green Chapel. But this mystery is the mystery of the poem itself and the poet does not tell us how to solve it. The whole structure, moreover, requires that the temptation to lust be seen as powerful.

CHARLES R. SLEETH,
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Gathorne Hardy

Sir, — It requires sharp eyes and local knowledge to catch Stephen Koss making a slip. But Gathorne Hardy never "tried unsuccessfully in 1847 to succeed his father as Liberal MP for Bradford" (September 4). John Hardy was a Tory and his son stood as a Conservative candidate in 1847. Admittedly, Hardy junior was much more liberal than his father, but his platform in 1847 was very similar to that of the Whigs and not all that different from that of the Radicals.

D. G. WRIGHT,
9 Victoria Park, Shipley, West Yorkshire.

'Dying, in other words'

Sir, — Maggie Gee's charge that I did not read "vast numbers of pages" of her novel is false. I spent long hours separating overlapping monologues and following morbid rhapsodies, and this dispute over details of plot simply emphasizes the flaws I pointed out in my review. *Dying, in other words* is a sloppy, second-hand book with a weak characterisation and too little of the wit of the masters (Nabokov, Vonnegut et al) to whom Maggie Gee has prayed in aid.

STODDARD MARTIN,
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commentary

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By Redmond O'Hanlon

Origin of Species
Natural History Museum

In a massive permanent exhibition designed to celebrate its centenary, the British Museum (Natural History) has exercised a hundred years of experience in educational display with characteristic virtuosity. On the upper floor, opposite a case full of the simplest and most elegant of all natural selectors, the big cats, a short corridor admits the visitor into a light, high-ceilinged and richly carpeted gallery now transformed into a fairground: there are red metallic tents in which one may decimate whole populations of disadvantaged dark mice on television screens; wooden igloos where films, animated cartoons, philosophical chat shows and audio-visual displays run constantly; whole amusement arcades of ingenious question-and-answer machines; and walls of more conventional exhibits which wind amongst Alfred Waterhouse's original and splendid columns, themselves decorated with all manner of whimsical beasts.

Towering panelled collages of photographs, with representative real specimens from the greatest natural history collections in the world, visually state the initial problem. How did this overwhelming variety of animals and plants, from the unicellular organism to the ciliated worm on the ocean floor, to the hooded cobra or the Sumatran tiger, come to be as it is? The extraordinary forms and personal devices of an Indian pangolin, like a monstrously purposeful fur cone; a hairy tree porcupine; a beaver offering his paddle for our speculation; a Bateleur Eagle, savagely regarding us over his shoulder; and an impassive Eagle Owl outstaring every admiring eye—all these silently ask us to choose between natural theology and natural selection. And, just in case such an assemblage is altogether too exotic, an English kestrel hovers in the wilderness space above our heads, while two male shrews fly curving into, but never quite reach, an English lake somewhere to our right.

Across this wealth of images two legends are inscribed. Above a black and white picture of a penguin, whose black beak is nevertheless playing in its full breeding colours, we are told: "One view is... all living things have developed by a process of gradual change over a very long period of time. This is what we mean by evolution." To the right, above an anxious young man who is presumably off to a fundamentalist graduate school in Alabama, we are reminded: "Another view is... God created all living things perfect and unchanging. He created each one for a special purpose. This is the basis of the doctrine of Creation." But here, in the extreme left hand corner, there rises the quizzical and subversive head of the Sinkerhorn *Phallus Impudicus*, complete with a fly at its tip.

At the start of the exhibition proper, an aged Charles Darwin sits reading; his study at Down House, a life-size photographic enlargement of one corner of which appropriately shows us the serried ranks of specially carpentered pigeon holes in which he placed his loose sheaves of notes under various headings. The rest of the exhibition brings the early contents of these seemingly innocuous wooden files to life and invites us to take the simplest possible walk through the great man's complex preoccupations.

We begin, like Darwin, by contemplating the dog lying at our fireside. Domestic, artificial selection of prized characteristics has certainly produced dramatic changes. Made a mere terror with Atrozed Frederick the Great (a preserved three-year-old bulldog presented to the museum in 1779 by Mr George Walsh and looking as if he, personally, would prefer to amputate your leg rather than suffer such an indignity), suitably interbreed, his

offspring for several generations, and you would eventually produce a Staffordshire Bull Terrier. But differences may also be relatively subtle. A chunky proto-sausage dog of 1875 is still obviously akin to the low level frankfurter dachshund of 1975.

So how are species made in wilder nature? Once again we are asked to look first at the immediate and familiar, the garden pond and its water boatmen; the weaselly distinguished and stoatily different family of the *Mustelidae*; the onions, leeks, garlic and chives of our vegetable garden; and, just to prove that it is not a wholly academic matter, a few False Blushers and Fly Agurics and the odd Death Cap. And then, by way of demonstrating that specific difference may be indicated by other means, music is provided for the entire exhibition by the specific songs of otherwise almost identical looking (and equally tireless) chaff chaffs and willow warblers.

Unpleasant necessities like death and competition of one kind or another are cheerily illustrated with a cartoon of the Sorengrit, trunk to tail with elephants. The consequent struggle is depicted with the help of a rabbit, very snug, in its cut-away burrow in the English chalk downland, temporarily unaware of the Common blue, the Small tortoise-shell, the Woodmouse, the Roman snail and the outsize, award-winning, impossibly shiny British Museum (Natural History) woodlice above its head. A very perky male rabbit appears to be finding the battle for food, for space in suitable surroundings, and for young brown-eyed females entirely to his taste.

As Darwin wrote, "our ignorance of the laws of variation is profound." But it is less profound than it was in 1859, and Darwin would probably have given a good twenty years' supply of snuff (his one discernible vice) for a chance to play a Mendelian game with the coat colour of shorthorn cattle; to study the modern implications of the inheritance of haemophilia amongst Queen Victoria's descendants; to add the genetic relationship between resistance to malaria and the possession of sickle cell anaemia to the huge amount of intricate accumulated evidence with which he held up his initial, simple idea.

He would have been delighted, too, with the more familiar, less mathematical demonstration of the varying fortunes of two different forms of the peppered moth, a spot-coloured mutant, first spotted in Manchester in 1848, is now dominant in industrial areas; with the astonishing series of Darnid butterflies illustrating Batesian mimicry; and with the dramatic new research by the Museum's own scientists into the possible mechanisms which produced the two hundred distinct but similar species of cichlid fishes in Lake Victoria in East Africa, a process directly analogous to the effects of isolation on small populations of Darwin's Galapagos finches, whose evolving beaks are here celebrated with an accompanying array of nutcrackers, tweezers and pliers.

This is a brilliantly selected and organized exhibition, well supported with its own small book, *Origin of Species*, jointly published by the Museum and Cambridge University Press (£12 paperback, 0 521 23878 7; £3.95 paperback, 0 521 28276 4).

ROY FOSTER's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* will be published later this year.

CHRISTOPHER HILL was Master of Balliol College, Oxford from 1965 to 1978. His books include *The World Turned Upside Down*, 1972, and *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution*, 1980.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON is Professor of French History at University College London. His books include *A Concise History of France*, 1970.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Age* will be published next year.

Heartbeats in the void

By Brian Powell

Iroha: Life of Change
Court Theatre, Holland Park

Percussion is part of Japanese life. Away from the pop music blaring from the loudspeakers of the urban pin-ball parlours, the sounds in the environment of the Japanese are mainly rhythmic and monotonous rather than melodic. The festival—and religious festivals are the only holidays in the pre-modern period were attended by all the local population—uses only the drum or the bell. The *no* drama, which was popular entertainment at festivals, sets its music to three drums and a flute. In kabuki the progress of the performance is marked by one set of clappers, while the dramatic climaxes are accentuated by another. There is virtually no dawn chorus in Japan, and the Westerner misses it. In the heat of the day there is the uninterrupted chatter of the cicadas instead, and the Japanese misses that here. It was in Japan that someone had the idea of mass-producing tapes of human heartbeats to soothe fretful babies.

Given this, it is not surprising that Japan has produced one of the world's greatest percussionists and exponents of percussion-based drama, Stomu Yamashita. The percussion of *Iroha*, Yamashita's recent production at the Court Theatre in Holland Park, could only have come from him. The sonorous temple bell was there, the cicadas, the human heart, the clappers, all fused into a rather less varied whole than in the past, but unique none the less. One missed the richness of instrumentation of *The Man from the East*, but Yamashita has not lost his capacity to create chord and percussion combinations that one feels cannot conceivably be improved upon.

The title Yamashita chose for his

new show is given the English subtitle, *Life of Change*. *I-ro-ha* are the first three syllables of a poem which contains all the forty-seven elements of the Japanese phonetic syllabary. The poem itself, Buddhist in inspiration, stresses the transience of life and urges the reader to free himself from the physical world and its vicissitudes by overcoming its temptations and uniting with the absolute. *Iroha* portrays in dance form the struggle between the Buddhist forces of good and evil. A succession of male and female characters then enters one by one, and each acts out the crisis in his or her life. In front sits a priest, shaking the beads of his rosary, chanting his sutras and practising exorcism by fire. Green laser beams flicker overhead, spotlights roam the stage and clouds of artificial smoke billow upwards. The priest is equal to the power of evil and steadfast in the face of its attacks. His novice, however, has not reached that plane of serenity and through the performance his dancing symbolizes his own personal struggle and the severity of Buddhist discipline. Perhaps Yamashita is showing us some of the trials which he himself experienced during his recent retreats.

Traditional elements are plentiful. The performing area, with its large central stage and passageways leading off to right and left, is modelled on the temple where *Iroha* was first performed, and the small pine trees planted at intervals in front of these passageways suggest the *no* theatre. *No* was the drama form most closely associated with Buddhism, especially Zen, and Yamashita has used many of its external features. He may have gone further than this. The programme and publicity mention bugaku and a famous fire festival, but much of *Iroha* is reminiscent of the *no* drama *Aoi no Ue*. This play, highly dramatic even in the refined style of private performance that developed in the early fifteenth century, has a climactic dance scene of exorcism.

On the stage lies a kimono symbolizing a young woman near to death through evil possession. Around her, in a hideous mask, dances the jealous spirit of the lady who has been forsaken for her. The spirit is quelled by a priest plying his rosary and intoning spells.

Which is more dramatic is hard to say. In neither case do the words matter. The words of the priest's chant in the *no* play are unintelligible to most and in *Iroha*, as in *The Man from the East*, Yamashita himself uses a language that is near Japanese but not understandable as such. As a spectator it is difficult to become involved with what one is seeing and hearing on a *no* stage. One's experience of Stomu Yamashita, however, leads one to have quite different expectations. In the past he has taken themes that concern everybody and set our ears and minds ringing with their implications. The Hiroshima sequence of *The Man from the East* was quite terrifying. Salvation and damnation and the hopes and fears of mankind concern us no less, and one expects to come changed from seeing Yamashita's presentation of them. But he keeps us at arm's length in *Iroha*. The straight rows of seats are well back from the stage. The loudspeakers are all in front of us. Festivals in Japan are participatory, but we were not allowed to participate in this one. Yamashita's music has moved people profoundly before, and perhaps we could have hoped that, even if only for a moment, we could feel our spirits leap away to the void. Yamashita disappointed us. The Court Theatre and the void were too neatly joined by his green lasers for there to be much scope for our spirits. I came away from *Iroha* feeling that I had simply been watching a show, and hoping that Yamashita would next time succeed once again in combining the Japanese and Western experience to shake his audience's consciousness.

Commentary continues on page 1083.

Among this week's contributors

LOUIS ALLEN is a lecturer in French at the University of Durham.

GEOFFREY BEST's most recent book is *Humanity in Warfare*, 1980. He is working on a book on war and society in revolutionary Europe.

NICHOLAS BEST's novel *Where Were You at Waterloo?* will be published shortly.

JEREMY CAYTO is a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.

RICHARD COMBS is editor of *The British Film Institute's Monthly Film Bulletin*.

PATRICIA CRAIG's critical study, *The Lady Investigates: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction*, a collaboration with Mary Cadogan, was published earlier this year.

NICHOLAS DAVIDSON is a lecturer in History at the University of Leicester.

ROY FOSTER's *Lord Randolph Churchill: A Political Life* will be published later this year.

CHRISTOPHER HILL was Master of Balliol College, Oxford from 1965 to 1978. His books include *The World Turned Upside Down*, 1972, and *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution*, 1980.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON is Professor of French History at University College London. His books include *A Concise History of France*, 1970.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Age* will be published next year.

JAMES KIRKUP teaches Comparative Literature at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. His recent books include *Dengonban Messages: One-line Poems*, 1981.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian book-seller in London.

HERMIONE LEE's *Elizabeth Bowen: An Estimation* will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of the TLS.

MARY LUTYENS's books include *Milids and the Ruskins*, 1976, *Krishnamurti*, 1975, and a recent memoir of her father, Edwin Lutyens.

HELEN McNEIL is a lecturer in the School of English and American Studies at the University of East Anglia.

RICHARD MAYNE's books include *The Recovery of Europe*, 1970, and a translation of Jean Monnet's *Memoirs*, 1978.

VENETIA NEWALL's books include *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Magic*, 1974. She is the editor of *International Folklore Review*.

S. N. PLAICE's latest translation is of *Tancred Dorset's Merlin*.

BRIAN POWELL is a Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. He is writing a book on the modern Japanese playwright, Mayama Seika.

BRYAN RANFT was Professor of History at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, from 1966 to 1977.

DAVID RIDGWAY is joint editor of *Italy Before the Romans*, 1979.

MICHAEL ROAF is Assistant Director of the British Archaeological Expedition to Iran and a Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford.

PAT ROGERS's books include *The Augustan Vision*, 1974, and *Henry Fielding*, 1979.

JOHN ROSE is lecturer in Modern History at Durham University and editor of the new journal *Parliament, Estates and Representation*.

K. G. ROBBINS's books include *The Abolition of War*, 1974.

VERNON SCANNELL's *New and Collected Poems 1950-1980* was published last year.

PETER STEAD is a lecturer in History at University College of Swansea.

STUART SUTHERLAND is Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Sussex.

A. J. P. TAYLOR's recent books include *Revolutions and Revolutionaries and Historians, Socialism and Politicians*, both 1980.

JULIAN TREUHERZ is Keeper of Fine Art at Manchester City Art Gallery.

J. B. TRAPP edited *The Apology of St Thomas More*, 1979.

GILLIAN TINDALL's most recent novel is *The Intruder*, 1979.

JEREMY WALDRON is a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

J. F. WATKINS is Professor of Medical Microbiology at the Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff.

STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the Oxford Shakespeare.

STANLEY WEINTRAUB's most recent book is *The London Yankee*, 1979.

The Historical Novel

Sir, — It was a pleasant surprise to see half a page of the TLS (August 28) devoted to that neglected (if marketable) commodity, the historical novel, but a disappointment to find Robert Hewison's approach so negative. After conceding that in a cold climate for the modern novel there is still profit in historical ones, he devotes most of his review to such destructive criticism of the genre in general and his nine subjects in particular that one ends by wondering why the vulgar things sell at all.

Mr Hewison has some very odd views about the historical novel. According to him, they are always historically inaccurate, and should therefore properly be called history-novels. I only know two of the authors he reviews, but I would defy him to find a major inaccuracy in Jean Stubbs or C. Northcote Parkinson. Too much, rather than too little history is often the failing of the modern historical novel, which, I suppose, is what Mr Hewison means when he says that "history removes the need for invention, so the narrator can concentrate on inventions".

But why does history remove the need for invention? Having, interestingly, conceded that it is possible to place any modern fictional genre in a historical setting, Mr Hewison goes on to the amazing conclusion that setting somehow entails an entire absence of character, plot and style. I would have said that the strength (and success) of the historical novel lies exactly in the fact that whereas plot is a dirty word in the context of the modern novel, it is an allowable virtue in historical ones. The stress between historical time and characters' time, between background and plot, is one of the fruitful problems of these books. I suppose *War and Peace* is the classic example of this. And would Mr Hewison really argue that there is no character in *War and Peace*? Or in *Henry Esmond*? Or in *The Birds Fall First*? Or in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*?

Coming back, later, to plot, Mr Hewison admits that a hero and heroine are necessary evils of the historical novel, and often achieve a happy (or fairy-story) ending. Has he not, perhaps, put his finger here on the answer to a question posed earlier in his article? What satisfactions, he asked, are there in writing or reading the things? Well, one of the satisfactions is the achievement of a happy ending. This has become almost impossible in a modern novel, except in the saccharine (if significantly successful) terms of Mills and Boon. But there are, in fact, happy moments in people's lives. By focusing on one of these, a happy ending becomes possible. By setting it in the past, it becomes believable. I expect Figaro's Count got into Susanna's bed pretty soon after the marriage, but that is neither here nor there in the opera. Jane Austen summed up the happy-ending problem in *Persuasion* when she described the happiness of Anne and Captain Wentworth: "His profession was all that could ever make her friends wish [her] tenderness less; the dread of a future war, all that could dim her sunshine." But, for the moment, they were happy.

Humankind cannot bear very much reality. Books on the royal wedding are still selling like ice cream in August. If the historical novel can make happy endings respectable, good for it. If the reader picks up a little history en passant, so much the better. One of Mr Hewison's criticisms is that "the source-bound author is unlikely to challenge conventional historical judgments". It is hardly his job, surely? And, oddly enough, when one of the authors under review does take a mildly idiosyncratic line, Mr Hewison at once accuses him of using twentieth-century devices, as, for instance, the outsider as hero, or the liberated woman as heroine. Twentieth-

century? They are surely as old as the novel.

Concern for style, according to him, is "rigidly excluded by the demands of naturalism". Why? One of the difficult pleasures of writing historical novels is trying to achieve a language, both in narrative and in dialogue, that will suggest the historical period without alienating, or worse still, boring the reader. Mary Renault and Georgette Heyer both succeed superbly at this in their very different ways.

Mr Hewison comes at last to the only one of the novels that he seems to have managed to enjoy at all. It is *Long Day at Shiloh*, which, he says, has no hero and no plot, but a great deal of style: "The invented dialogue with its onomatopoeic spelling brings the material alive". It sounds remarkably like a modern novel. Perhaps Mr Hewison would be happier, and more constructive, reviewing those.

JANE AIKEN HODGE,
23 Eastport Lane, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1TL.

Poetry and Esperanto

Sir, — George Szirtes's suggestion of an analogy for the joint effort of Octavio Paz and Charles Tomlinson (September 4) is perceptive — more so to the potentialities of Esperanto than his achievements, which can hardly compare with those of either poet. The quoted lines indeed translate readily:

Domo farita de memor' el si,
temp-interpase blanka — pli pensite
de vive, pli dulta de penalo,
domo dadrá dum la propra son'...

But I agree that Montale is better.

KRIS LONG,
85 Point Royal, Bracknell, Berks.

Sir, — As a poet whose language is Esperanto I take serious exception to George Szirtes's sentence (September 4): "But in tackling archetypal themes they have committed themselves to a kind of poetic Esperanto". This is plainly intended to be derogatory, as witness the word "archetypal" in the following sentence. "A kind of poetic Esperanto", indeed! — he means, I suppose, a kind of unpoetic English. It is obvious your reviewer has never read any Esperanto poetry, which makes his comment intellectually and morally dishonest, and until he has read some of our best poets he should desist from making such judgments.

W. AULD,
20 Harviestown Road, Dollar, Clackmannanshire, Scotland, FK14 7HG.

The 'Athenian Society'

Sir, — In his review of A. B. England's *Energy and Order in the Poetry of Swift* (September 4) Claude Rawson feels that Swift's "Ode to the Athenian Society" contains lines "which can be suspected of some element of mockery of the Athenian Society itself, though it [he] tenders it as eulogistic". This may reflect Swift's own embarrassment for his wholehearted approval of the Society in the Ode, when he learned that the men he had praised so highly were hacks. Swift was certainly fervent in his admiration of the Society, even if his admiration was short-lived: not only did he sign and date his poem (a very rare occurrence), but he wrote to his cousin Thomas Swift that as a result of the poem's acceptance "I was in a good humor all the week". He then added that he felt poets could not write well "except they think the subject deserves it" (Correspondence, 1.8).

It seems unlikely that even a hint of satire directed at the Athenians is present in the Ode.

HENRY MERRITT,
21 Cyprus Road, Cambridge.

Translating Kopelev

Sir, — In his review of Lev Kopelev's *The Education of a True Believer* (July 31), Michael Scammell condemns my translation with one sentence: "Unfortunately, the book is afflicted with a translation of such grotesque and egregious incompetence that only by a miracle does anything of the original survive at all". Mr Scammell continues: "Yet readers who persist with it will find their efforts rewarded, especially in the concluding chapters..."

Already Mr Scammell undercuts his criticism, for if my translation were such a monstrosity, further reading could hardly reward readers' efforts. A translation that bad cannot, and should not, be read.

Permit me to say something about the book not mentioned in the review. Its author, Lev Kopelev, is a polyglot who provides generous samples of the languages in his cultural formation. The book, *I sovetskiy sebe kumira*, is written not only in Russian, but also in Ukrainian, Polish, German and Yiddish: one chapter is even devoted to Esperanto. There are, in addition, Biblical quotations, Soviet acronyms, poems and a variety of names in Cyrillic letters, all of which pose problems for the translator. It is to be expected that I would commit errors, as any human being must (I corrected the author's errors in Esperanto and Biblical quotations, for example), and likewise it is inevitable that some readers would not agree with my solutions. In a previous review, Hugh McLennan remarks that the translator "faced formidable problems: passages rife with colloquialisms, slang and even foreign languages — German, Polish and especially Ukrainian. How is a poor translator to reproduce the effect of Ukrainian passages in a Russian text? Mr Kern clears some of his hurdles brilliantly. But he seems to have worked in haste, and there are far too many slips and misunderstandings" (*New York Times Book Review*, August 31, 1980). Unlike Mr Scammell, Professor McLennan lists some of my mistakes, but he certainly does not brand my work as grotesque and egregiously incompetent.

Of course, it is impossible to prove one's professional competence in a letter to the editor, just as it is difficult to fight against the charge of insanity. To cite my credentials, my education and previous translations, would appear pretentious, while to point out the shortcomings of Mr Scammell's review would be petty and vindictive. Above all, to enter into a detailed defence of the translation would bore everybody. There is nothing to be done, neither by me nor for anyone else, saveged by critic, for in any event the critic will have the last word. Suffice it to say that should Mr Scammell care to prove my grotesque and egregious incompetence, I would appreciate the opportunity to respond. In the meantime, I must take solace in the approval of my work by other readers, who include the author.

Finally, to indicate that something of the original does survive in my translation, whether by accident or "miracle", I offer a short passage. (More complicated passages, employing foreign words, are too long for this letter.) Kopelev speaks of his yearning for an international union of brotherly love:

V yunosti ya veril, cho eta nadezhda perevoplotilsya v prizyv: "Proletarii vechi stran, soedinyai-tes!" Pozdnee ubedilsya, cho ona zhivet i vo mnogikh drugikh voploscheniyakh. I vsego ravstvennoe dlya moya tegorodnya, v puskinkinskiy rechi Dostoevskogo, — "Byi po nastoyashchemu russkim, — eto znachit byi vseheloevkom".

My translation:

In youth I believed that this hope had taken flesh in the call: "Workers of the world, unite!" Later I became convinced that it

lived as well in many other embodiments. And for me today it sounds most clearly in the Pushkin speech of Dostoevsky: "To be really a Russian — this means to be a vseheloevk, a universal man".

GARY KERN,
545 Highlander Drive, Riverside, California 92507.

The United Irishmen

Sir, — Pádraig Ó Snodaigh's reference (Letters, August 28) to the number of United Irishmen in County Carlow in 1798 would appear to require some clarification. He cites figures to indicate that between 17,000 and 14,000 of the total population (men, women and children) of 44,000 were United Irishmen. Assuming males and females were about evenly distributed in the population before industrialization, famine and emigration intervened to upset demographic patterns, and that both young children (under fifteen) and old folks would have represented about 40 per cent of all persons, one would arrive at something like 13,000 adult males able, though not necessarily willing, to give allegiance to the cause of the United Irishmen. That every Tom, Dick and Seamus ("between 11,000 and 14,000") should have done so seems wildly improbable.

JOSEPH O'BRIEN,
28 Argyle Lane, East Hampton, NY.

Sir Gawain and The Green Knight

Sir, — One does not lightly disagree with a scholar and critic who discourses as subtly as Professor T. A. Shippey, but I cannot accept his assertion, in his review of Humphrey Carpenter's edition of *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (August 28), that Sir Gawain, when the lady of the castle offers herself to him in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, "never feels the temptation of lust at all" and that "if he had, neither he nor the poet, nor Tolkien as editor, would have mentioned it". To say that the poet does not mention it requires one to suppose that there is nothing libidinous about the "wigt wallande joye" (ardently upwelling joy) which the poet tells us warmed Gawain's heart (line 1762) at the sight of the lady in her beautiful and revealing attire. Besides, the poet goes on to say (lines 1768-9) that "Gret perle biwene hem stod", "Ni Mard of bi knyght myn". Great danger would have been present between them if the Virgin Mary had not taken thought for her knight, and these words are also hard to reconcile with a reading of the poem which makes Gawain immune to the temptation of lust. In an unforced reading they speak of temptation, resisted, and it seems a dubious compliment to Tolkien to suggest that he read them as referring to temptation never felt.

Such a reading, in my opinion, would also do injustice to the poet's mastery of plot and characterization and his grasp of his theme. Of course, the real issue is never whether Gawain will commit carnal sin, but Gawain is made to think so, and the reader or hearer is made to think so, up to the very moment when the surprise is sprung. Gawain is up against an adversary who knows how to make him concentrate his attention on the wrong object; if a mere practitioner of legerdemain is skilled at this, how immeasurably more so must an authentic magician be! If we may apply terms of secular warfare to Gawain's psychomachia, the adversary's use of carnal temptation is a feint. To be effective, however, a feint must present itself to the attacked party as a serious threat, engrossing his attention and powers of resistance so that he is unable to counter the real threat from another quarter. So it is with Gawain. Intent on

his successful resistance to carnal temptation, he offers no resistance to the spiritual temptation, and indeed does not even recognize that his grave spiritual sin of cowardice and covetousness (lines 2369-86) is anything but a normal act of self-preservation (lines 1855-8). He shows us this unawareness by making what can only be an incomplete confession to his host's chapel priest (line 1876-84) — the poet's assurance that it was a complete confession must be taken as irony, for how can anyone "be pardoned and retain the offence"? — and by seeing no inconsistency between his repeated protestation that his trust is in God (lines 2138-9, 2158-9) and the fact that his trust is really in the green girdle (line 2040). It is only after the Green Knight shows him that the green girdle does not make him invulnerable, and tells him that his would be the punishment for his breach of faith, that Gawain's eyes are opened. He then performs the act of contrition (lines 2369-86) that was obviously missing in his earlier confession (lines 1876-84), and receives what must be valid absolution from the Green Knight (lines 2389-94).

By this reading the Green Knight is one of the most enigmatic figures in all literature, playing the part of the very devil himself in Gawain's psychomachia but acting as a priest and as the agent of God's purposes at the Green Chapel, but this mystery is the mystery of the poem itself and the poet does not tell us how to solve it. The whole structure, moreover, requires that the temptation to lust be seen as powerful.

CHARLES R. SLEETH,
Department of English, Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, Brooklyn, New York 11210.

Gathorne Hardy

Sir, — It requires sharp eyes and local knowledge to catch Stephen Koss making a slip. But Gathorne Hardy never "tried unsuccessfully in 1847 to succeed his father as Liberal MP for Bradford" (September 4). John Hardy was a Tory and his son stood as a Conservative candidate in 1847. Admittedly, Hardy junior was a much more liberal Conservative than his father, for his platform in 1847 was very similar to that of the Whigs and not all that different from that of the Radicals.

D. G. WRIGHT,
9 Victorin Park, Shipley, West Yorkshire.

'Dying, in other words'

Sir, — Maggie Gee's charge that I did not read "vast numbers of pages" of her novel is false. I spent long hours separating overlapping monologues and following morbid rhapsodies, and this dispute over details of plot simply emphasizes the flaws I pointed out in my review. *Dying, in other words* is a sloppy, recidive book with too many characters and too little of the wit of the masters (Nabokov, Vonnegut et al) to whom Maggie Gee has prayed in aid.

STODDARD MARTIN,
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255pp. Michael Joseph. £6.95.
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This confession – shall I call it? – is written to keep myself from brooding, to get down what happened in the order in which it happened. I am not content with myself. With this pencil and exercise book I hope to find some clarity. I create a second self, a man of the past by whom the man of the present may be measured. Like the narrators of many of Geoffrey Household's subsequent novels, the protagonist and putative author of *Rogue Male* is an avowedly amateur writer, forced into recording and revealing by circumstance rather than through vanity. He regards writing as something which requires the courtesy of an explanation; it is, after all, not an activity a sane man would necessarily take up. His explanation provides two perhaps conflicting motives for telling a story – the relatively simple desire to convey the facts, and a less pragmatic anxiety to immobilize the flickering anxiety. Such a distinction has often served to sort bestselling sheep from literary goats.

Rogue Male, his first real success and probably still the book which makes Household a "name", is in print now, and has been so sporadically since 1939 – a good run for what might at first have looked a very ordinary work. The list of Household's work in the frontispiece of *Summon the Bright Water*, a fairly routine adventure published in 1955, classifies books like *Rogue Male* and *Archie* as "novels" while his first novel *Third Hour and Arabesque* are set above them, distinguished as "novels". That embarrassed segregation, tacitly confessing that thrillers are at best a diversion, is now of 1939 Household, who recently celebrated his eightieth birthday, has worked as diligently as any writer to confuse the categories.

Rogue Male takes the form of the fiction which presents itself as an authentic document, a narrative form in the later novels has explored increasing ingenuity. We are asked to believe, significantly large number of his books, that the original manuscripts were not neat sheaves of double-spaced A4 but hastily purchased notebooks dispatched mud-stained to solicitors in case of arrest; or else that they were journals discovered months after the author's death, mildewed but readable, in a black insect-proof metal box delivered to the publishers of his fascinating monograph *Fodder Plants of the New World*.

The convention is as old as the novel, if not more senior, and has obvious and particular advantages for the thriller writer. Even when related in a directly partisan manner, the "ignorance" of the central characters is preserved. Psychological ripping yarn, a notorious drag on the prose, is subsumed into action: discursive, slangy and self-consciously unartistic. But Household doesn't just use the device because it provides a meretricious authenticity. He has shown it to be a narrative method of some sophistication and adaptability and over his lengthy career has produced several elegant and useful variations on the basic theme.

In *Rogue Male* the story is divided into three consecutive sections, a simple elaboration which lifts the dead hand of hindsight but also allows the narrator to come clean about a self-deception in the early passages. In *Dance of the Dwarfs*, a novel about the sources and effects of fear and superstition, he brings off the sleight of hand of revealing, in a

publisher's preface to the discovered manuscript, what finally happens to the principal characters while maintaining suspense until the final, unfinished sentence. In *Ohara*, a novel set in the Basque country with a British philologist as the hero, we are presented with a portfolio of different accounts of the same events though, as an introduction warns, "one might be forgiven for failing, here and there, immediately to recognise that indeed they are the same".

Household also has a nice line in self-disparagement, an enjoyable flourish to acknowledge to the reader that we all know what is going on really. In *Rogue Male* the central character, revealing in a letter the final twist to the story (a Household story generally ends on the last page, which is not as easy as it sounds), writes "I want these papers published. If necessary have them brushed up by some competent hack and marketed under his name." And in *Fellow Passenger* a scientific and correct Epilogue by Sir Alexander Romilly, C.H., D.Sc., D.Litt., F.R.S., describes the preceding pages as "a work of which the execrable taste, enlivened though it be by ribaldry, can arouse and indeed deserves no thing but disgust". The strength of the novels is not in the details of plot, which even in *Rogue Male* occasionally stretches a little thin, but in the skill with which this simple device is manipulated. Things happen in the writing as well as in the world the writer describes.

Unfortunately knowing how narrative works isn't a firm guarantee that it always will, and *Summon the Bright Water*, the latest Household novel, is a good example of some of the drawbacks of his favourite method. The narrator in this case is Piers Colet, an economic historian on a walking tour along the banks of the Severn, who stays overnight at a remote inn to discover the mysterious source of its finances. He is nearly murdered by the sinister leader of the community, Simon Martin, falls in love with Martin's niece Elsa, and takes an active and insouciant part in two manslaughters. He writes ostensibly because he wishes to prepare "a record of events which will explain my own actions and serve as the basis of my defence if I am run in on a charge of murder", but there is no sense of a terse necessity driving his narrative and the enthusiasm with which Colet throws himself into amateur detection and field-craft suggest a delinquent venture so gently rather than the victim of genuinely dangerous men. We suffer here from the enforced intimacy of the confessional journal, which works elsewhere to enlist our sympathies. Colet is opinionated, complacent and has

Bathing-slips and bliss

By Vernon Scannell

DIRK BOGARDE:
Voices in the Garden
368pp. Chatto and Windus. £6.95.
0 7017 2572 1

Dirk Bogarde's first novel, *A Gentle Occupation*, published last year, was generally well received and quite properly praised for its liveliness of characterization and dialogue. It showed a tendency towards a curious kind of surrogate narcissism and exhibitionism – much was made of the hero's very abbreviated khaki-drill shorts and scanty bathing slips – and a rather sentimental view of the principal relationships; but the wobble towards sentimentality was checked by an astirgent note of irony, by the background of South-East Asia and by the treatment of the mores of the military community there.

Bogarde's new novel, *Voices in the Garden*, which is set in an opulent villa on Cap Ferrat and purports to deal with the problems of erotic love and the sad process of ageing, is ruinously flawed by the inept weaknesses shown in his first

novel. The inviolable knowledgeability of the pub bore. He is not even really surprised by the attempt to murder him.

Murder for the sake of religion has never been a problem for the fanatic. Look at Hindu and Mohammedan in India or the bloodthirsty sects of the Middle East, or nearer to our own cultural aberrations that fellow Jones who fascinated his entire colony in Guyana into committing suicide.

The narrative is constantly interrupted by such aperçus, generally couched in the sort of bluff military euphemism which once made an old gentleman, in my hearing, refer to Adolf Hitler as "Mr H". Colet is also relentlessly keen to pass on information. When Elsa suggests that the money for the commune might be coming from her uncle's alchemical experiments we are told that "She was in good company. Isaac Newton had believed it possible and in later life suffered from fits of insanity, probably due to the ingestion of lead and mercury which he lavished on his experiments."

Summon the Bright Water is in some ways a re-working of *Rogue Male*, continuing the theme of the hunted male thrown back on instinct and cunning for survival and employing the same three-part narrative structure. But it has none of the intelligent and crafted purpose of the earlier book. A feverish invention has replaced the simplicities, so that the plot is an increasingly unlikely confection of hidden treasure and underworld searches, pagan worship and even hints at a connection with Atlantis. In the end the book is rather like being stuck in a provincial hotel with an elderly guest telling tall stories and quoting interesting bits from *Old Reader's Digest*.

Household's collection of short stories *Capricorn and Cancer* provides a perfect alternative to this novel. Household started by writing stories and he does it in the old style: they are not epiphanies but tales with a twist and the selection here again testifies to his invention and talent in narrative, ranging from a Waugh-like description of the burial of a dictator's heart to a grim account of an unofficial war-time assassination. Two of the most memorable, "The Idealist" and "First Blood", describe acts of insane courage prompted by motives no more passionate than politeness and a sense of social propriety. They are perceptive, funny and entirely convincing, and they are told not in the voice of the main character or through found documents but by a politely omniscient author. It is a useful reminder that Geoffrey Household is a writer and more effective storyteller than the narrator of *Summon the Bright Water*.

preoccupation with male physical beauty becomes almost obsessive (bathing-slips again, themselves very small, feature very large); sentimentality runs through narrative and dialogue like melting marzipan; and the characters, all of whom are as lifeless as figures in a strip cartoon, exhibit vanity, stupidity and greed, attributes which the author seems to view as lovable virtues. Archie, a septuagenarian military historian, lives with his wife, Cuckoo (affectionately so-called because, when younger, she was "in and out of everybody's nest"), in the splendid villa to which comes a magnificently handsome young man, Marcus. Cuckoo refers to him as a "scrumptious" her rather odd use of this old-fashioned schoolgirl adjective as a substantive is applied to all pulchritudinous young men. Marcus prevents Cuckoo from committing suicide by drowning, is installed in the villa as a guest and is later joined by his German girlfriend, Leni Minx, who first met Marcus when they were posing for – well – titillating photographs. "No full Frontals" as Marcus virtuously emphasizes, "a kind of cock-leasers' Fortnum and Mason". Leni, by the way, is not really the little scurrier

In the icy North

By Michael Trend

JOHN BUCHAN:
Sick Heart River
229pp. Loamhead, Midlothian: Macdonald. £6.95.
0 904265 43 9

John Buchan's last novel, *Sick Heart River*, set in the freezing far north of Canada, was written when the author was Governor-General of that country and a dying man. Its reissue is a welcome event but Trevor Royle's four-page introduction is a sadly missed opportunity to comment in any depth on Buchan's time in Canada and on his valedictory story. It is not his best novel – as Mr Royle claims – but it is one that those familiar with Buchan's work will find particularly moving.

Sick Heart River is the story of Sir Edward Leithen's – and by strong implication the author's – "last and greatest adventure", as Buchan's wife put it. Leithen, knowing that he is terminally ill, prepares to meet his end "to the standing, to go out in his boots". He undertakes to go to Canada to seek out and restore to sanity Francis Galliard, a man of genius in the business world: "there aren't five men in the United States whose repute stands higher" (none of Buchan's heroes – or villains – are ever anything less than one of the "top five men").

The main thread of the novel concerns Leithen's travels in the North with the dependable Johnny Frizell as his guide. They are chasing Galliard and his guide, Lew Frizell (Johnny's brother), who is impelled by a lunatic obsession to reach the nearly inaccessible Sick Heart River. Leithen's task of returning Galliard to his senses brings him up against the dangerous condition of Lew and against a tribe of Hare Indians which is committing collective suicide through anaemia and depression.

The characters in this forceful and dramatically-told tale are all sick of Biblical allusions, the symbolism of reaching and crossing rivers of life and death, the various references to *Pilgrim's Progress*, are constant themes as the characters come face to face with the power of their ancestry, their religion and their attitudes to life and death. The uncompromising harshness of the mountains and the horrendous cold and fear of starvation are opposed by Lew Grizell ("a creature so instinct with life") and by the "deep purpose of mercy" that Leithen comes to discover as part of the dispensation

of his rather Old Testament God: "Now there suddenly broke in on him like a sunrise a sense of God's mercy – deeper than the foreordination of things".

That this is Buchan speaking directly to his readers there can be no doubt. Susan Buchan wrote "I think that Sir Edward Leithen is perhaps the most like John Buchan of any of the characters. I recognize in sentences which he gives to Sir Edward to say, and in actions which he makes him perform, some touches of autobiography" (Buchan was at the same time working on his volume of memoirs, *Memory Hold-the-Door*). *Sick Heart River* was in part based on the experiences of Buchan's son Johnnie who had spent a year in the Arctic, but it was also the result of a very successful trip that the Governor-General had himself made to the Canadian North. (At Akilavik, among the officials greeting the party was the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, who signed himself "Archibald the Arctic".)

It was Buchan's last chance to see the wilds of nature that he had loved so much. There are many moments in his wife's account of the journey that remind one of the last novel: "My husband's fancy had been caught by a certain Riviere de l'Enfer, which is supposed to be somewhere far away in the hinterland of Quebec, and about which he is always trying to get news"; "talk all ways drifted to the valley of the South Nahanni River, which is one of the mystery spots of the North". It is as if Buchan were saying farewell by searching out the ultimate hiding spot.

Buchan also pays his final respects to his fictional family, a group of many heroes that a whole generation of readers grew up with. Leithen "pictures the places to which they specially belonged: Lamancha – on the long slopes of Cheviot; Archie Koylance on the wind-blown thymy borders of the west; Sandy in his border fortress; and Dick Hannay by the clear streams and gentle pastures of Cotswold". All these characters, as readers of Buchan's novels quickly realize, are reflections of their author's abilities and aspirations – part-statesman, part-rustic, part-man of action, part-magician.

Buchan died in office in 1940 during a World War into which his novels and characters would have ill-fitted. His admirers will, however, remember him from this novel as he would have wished – standing with Leithen on the shelf of mountains in the bleak, frozen, Arctic wilderness, "breathing air which was chilly as ice and scented with a thousand miles of pines".

first novel showed some evidence, of listening to and simulating the real talk of living people. So much of the dialogue in *Voices in the Garden* reads like excerpts from a dreadful 1930s drawing-room comedy. Here is a typical exchange between Archie and Cuckoo:

He laughed softly. "You are wicked. I bet you've got something up your sleeve. I know you far too well."
She folded her arm in his, pressed it firmly. "You don't know me at all. After all these many years you still don't know me, I'm deep as a well... and you have never lowered your bucket down very far."
He kissed her cheek. "Oh, I don't know about that. Fact is that the water at the top, so to speak, was so delicious, I didn't really need to. Will that do?"

"Thank you. Pretty put, but I expect that you fear the water at the bottom of a well might be rather... she looked up into his clear blue eyes." "muddy?"
He laughed, and disengaged himself. "You are a dotty one. No I never cared for mud."

BERNARD SEMMEL (Editor):
Marxism and the Science of War
302pp. Oxford University Press.
£15.95 (paperback). £6.95.
0 19 876112 0

Borrowing for a moment from the basic vocabulary and manners of some of the writers of the extracts which fill most of this book, we would like – before proceeding to judge whether Bernard Semmel's assessment of them is correct – to begin by establishing what precisely and concretely the book is about. "Marxism" for one set of reasons, and "the science of war" for another, are not perspicuous terms, and the author has been so strong-minded and self-denying as to do without a subtitle. If there were one, how might it read? Something like: *The Theory and Practice of War* as expounded by main-line Marxist-Leninists from the Founding Fathers to the Present. Professor Semmel has settled starkly on "The Science of War", reasonably enough, in order to intimate that the matter in question is the momentous one of finding war its proper place in the grand edifice of superior, indeed scientific understanding which Marxists believe to be theirs.

His introduction accordingly attempts the double analysis, "both of how Marxist ideology helped to shape a Marxist science of war, and of how the science of war has altered the face of Marxism". The extracts, presented in five thematic groups, come from a relatively concentrated selection of authors: from Marx and Engels, eighteen together; Luxemburg and Bukharin, one each; Lenin eight and Trotsky eleven; Mao Tse-tung seven, and Lin Biao two; Ernest Mandel and Régis Debray, one each; and a miscellany of contemporary Soviet military theorists, of whom the least unfamiliar should be Marshal Sokolovskii and Admiral Gorshkov, thirteen. The object, it will be seen, is to study, not persons or persons, but problems; not to survey all the varieties and nuances of Marxism but to present as systematically as possible what major Marxists (meaning, besides those who have argued the case, the most persuasively, those who have simply been on the winning side) have proclaimed to be correct answers to the main questions: how much of a science of war (viz. Clausewitz) can a Marxist-Leninist share with a bourgeois? how much war (nuclear, included) is to be gone through before universal socialism makes war obsolete, and how should Marxist-Leninists view it and prepare for it? and how, in particular, are the revolutionary situations all over Africa, Asia and Central/South America best to be brought to victorious fruition?

So much of the appeal of socialism and communism lying in their visions and promise of peace, and the dove – especially since Picasso gave them the most famous dove since Noah's – having become peculiarly their bird, not the eagle, it can require a certain mental fortitude to recall that that promise is provisional, and that dove still a long way from home. "Disarmament is the ideal of socialism", wrote Lenin in 1916. "There will be no wars in socialist society; consequently, disarmament will be achieved. But..." (p. 186). Twenty years later, Mao was writing: "The aim of war is to eliminate war. War, among men, will be finally eliminated by the progress of human society, and in the not too distant future too. But..." (p. 178). In an extract from the Moscow 1972 collective work *Marxism-Leninism on War and Army*: "Communism brings eternal peace to mankind. The most important content of communist ideology is internationalism, humanism, love of peace, the mutual assistance of peoples in all spheres of social life..." (p. 291). Always that "But" – forbidding, realistic or exhilarating, according to how one chooses to regard it. As William Odom, David Holloway and others have reminded us, socialism, far from being ill-suited for war, is a socio-political system which actually can go to war very well.

– and British readers should need no reminding that it was precisely when their own country's socio-political organization was most nearly socialist, from 1942 to 1945, that its war-effort achieved its most solid purposefulness.

The Soviet armed forces had no direct experience of war between 1945 and 1979 (and then it was only Afghanistan), but there is no convincing evidence of any popular Russian desire to reduce them or to escape Russia's multifarious military service; rather do Soviet citizens seem to accept their leaders' argument, that such a high degree of military readiness, undeniably costly though it be, has actually preserved their peace as nothing less awesome would have done. Nor can this be attributed wholly to Russia's strong military tradition and long familiarity with authoritarian government. Vietnam might be found to offer parallels, but to press China and Cuba into the same mould is to stretch credulity beyond breaking point. Military science and efficiency can be seen as just as necessary to protect socialism, once established, as to achieve it in the first place.

But the question of protecting established socialism (or communism, or whatever it became in the Soviet Union) is of course exclusively a post-1917 one, and indeed a much more recent one still for any country but Russia. Most of the Marxists cited here have in view the achievement of socialism in their own country and, on grounds both altruistic and prudential, in everyone else's. That this must mean war in some form or other – "violence", anyway – they almost all take for granted, altering the analysis from time to time only to cope with the changing shape of their arch-enemy (as they perceive him), the bourgeois nationalist and imperialist. But if their analysis of international relations has little of liveliness, variety and (a non-Marxist might well complain) sensitivity or even realism in it, their prescriptions for the most appropriate and promising mode of achieving the years ago great deal, both through the years, and at any one time, among themselves. The outlining of this variation and development is the main theme of Semmel's forty-page Introduction, and it is undoubtedly the aspect of the book which will most interest the contemporary reader, if only because he can now see the stark end of it or even feel it already sticking into him.

The founding fathers, as is by now well known, took a great interest in the wars of their age and wrote with much intelligence about them. No better contemporary commentaries were published than those of Marx and Engels (it is sometimes difficult to know who was the more responsible) upon, for example, "the Indian mutiny", the American Civil War, and Prussia's short sharp wars against Austria and France. Engels, moreover, became one of the century's best-informed writers on military history and the science of war in general, and wrote enough in those fields to have made a name in them alone, if there had been no others. He and Marx, once they had got past their personal revolutionary involvements in 1848, surveyed this side of the life of their age with scientific detachment. Accepting war as a natural fact of life, and admiring Clausewitz for having written more penetratingly about war than anyone else, they analysed and classified wars as major devices of social development which expressed with peculiar directness the antagonisms bound to exist between exploited and exploiters (whether within one society or as between one society and another) and between commercial and imperial rivals.

In the course of such analysis and classification they could not help lighting upon two problems, which have remained of central interest to their followers ever since: first, under what conditions and with what technology can "the people" (whether Chinese or Moroccan, French or Polish) take on the armed apparatus of State power? and second, how can the results of wars between advanced countries, like Germany and France,

Out of the barrel of a gun

By Geoffrey Best

– and made sure to conform to the requirements of dialectical materialism? Engels, towards the end of his life, became increasingly concerned to find answers to these questions, but came up with nothing more encouraging than recommendations to "the people" to take advantage of the free instruction in the use of weapons their rulers were giving them by means of conscription, and to wait for the culminating day when increasing polarization of classes would enable them to use their experience to make class warfare military. The apparent power of the State and the need to wait for the wheels of history to turn joined a certain humane distaste for avoidable bloodshed to prevent Engels from seeing any faster way forward.

Lenin it was who, in the next generation, grasped the netles and laid about him with them. It was no good waiting for history, as the prime pundits and elder statesmen of Marxism required. As capitalism increasingly turned imperialist, revealing to the eyes of Hilferding, Luxemburg, Bukharin and others of the new generation an appetite for aggressive warfare more profound and systematic than even the founding fathers had supposed, so, said Lenin, must the people more urgently seek ways of being aggressive themselves and, with luck, hustling the pace of history on a bit. He appealed, in effect, from the older, more cautious Marx and Engels to their younger selves, who had thought hopefully enough of barricades and picketries in 1848 and had believed, that bright confident morning, that perhaps the course of history could be bent to their revolutionary will.

Much of the direct violent action taken by "the people" in the 1905 revolution impressed Lenin enormously and seems to have set him thinking on new lines. Semmel's extracts from his 1906 writings are of crucial significance. Sensing a widening range of revolutionary opportunities and evidently thirsting to take advantage of them, Lenin – wedded as he was to the conviction that Marxism provided a uniquely "scientific" understanding of the human world – had to prove that he had acquired a more scientific understanding of the current situation than anyone else. "Let us begin from the beginning," he pleaded. "Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle... Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes [my italics], Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack..." "The Party had been right formerly to condemn 'old Russian terrorism' and to keep well away from mere 'hooliganism', Blanquism, anarchism etc., but times were changing, the working-class's insistence on violent forms of action was growing, it was 'absolutely natural and inevitable' that the due culmination should be 'the higher and more complex form of a prolonged civil war embracing the whole country' and 'guerrilla warfare' was in these circumstances a perfectly correct method. They had been wary of guerrilla warfare in the past, as being 'abnormal and demoralizing', and anarchic; but so long as the Party kept control of it, put it into its proper place in relation to other methods of struggle and 'ennobled [it] by the enlightening and organizing influence of socialism', nothing but good could result.

Upon this hinge, the book turns. The nuclear question apart, guerrilla warfare becomes its main theme even as the key in which it is set changes from original Marxism to Marxist-Leninism. The assumption remains unchanged, that capitalism and imperialism, put increasingly on the defensive, must sooner or later come crumbling down and richly deserve to do so, but the principal interest becomes that of the people's seeking release from them at the first, not the last, opportunity. To cut a long story short and to skirt the most tedious (though not, for the patient, the least instructive) extracts – those from Trotsky as he argued with Tukhachevsky and other deluded comrades about the correct form of organization for the Red Army and the correct strategy and tactics for it – it concerns the adaptation of Marx's and Lenin's revolutionary principles, developed as they were in the circumstances of advanced industrial societies, to suit the very different circumstances of peasant, rural societies.

Lenin indeed had hustled history on to most remarkable effect, but the means had been action primarily in the cities, led by his city-based revolutionary vanguard. He had revolutionized it society which was by no means the most advanced industrial society available, but he had never supposed that leadership could come from anywhere other than a party formed and forged in an industrial proletariat. Moscow's hand – heavier when it became more Stalin's than Lenin's – lay heavy on the communist parties of the less advanced countries, and correct thinking inevitably focused their attention on the cities and the proletariats within them, with disastrous consequences. A bigger transformation of the faith even than Lenin's was required.

The momentous break was made by the military genius among the Chinese communists, Mao Tse-tung. Guerrilla warfare was now presented as the correct staple for a revolutionary movement in a pre-industrial society, was brought to a high scientific pitch of sophistication and expertise, and was offered to the rest of the undeveloped world, as their way forward. Mao had even more difficulty than Lenin and Trotsky had had in persuading his perhaps even more doctrinaire comrades that "the correct Marxist military line" – to be deduced from "the concrete analysis of concrete conditions" – was the one he persistently advocated, which they considered mere "guerrilla-ism", and not theirs ("the Li Li-sun line") which he considered mere "Left opportunism".

The jargon was awful, but the stakes were gigantic – the liberation of a revolutionized China – and Mao got it right. His military writings of the later 1930s qualified him to become the Clausewitz of the Third

World, a status which his disciple Lin Biao further cemented thirty years later when he universalized the Chinese experience in his famous proclamation of "the countryside's revolution" against the city. "Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory of people's war has been proved by the long practice of the Chinese revolution to be in accord with the objective laws of such wars and to be invincible... a great contribution to the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations and peoples throughout the world..." "creatively developing Marxism-Leninism, [and] thus adding new weapons to [its] arsenal."

Here indeed was a revolution within revolutionary theory – the Party building its strength and bases not among the proletariat in the cities but among the peasantry of the countryside, and believing in the imminence of the crack-up of capitalism with a fervour in comparison with which the Russians had been no more than tepid. But another surprise was yet to come. (The 1960s were full of surprises). Whatever else Mao and Lin were doing to Marxism-Leninism, they were not about to sap the primacy of the Party. They only wanted to make sure that the Party got it right before it opened serious hostilities. Now came from – of all unexpected countries – Cuba, the suggestion that so long as revolutionaries got the hostilities right, the Party could be left to take care of itself. Viewed with mixed feelings by the orthodox communists of their continent, yet unanswerable in the completeness of their military success, Fidel Castro and his extraordinary band of revolutionary liberationists, some of them more or less Marxist but none of them communists by the standards of Moscow or Peking, presented the *fait accompli* of a Party and leadership forged in the struggle itself. Social origins, economic base, theoretical correctness etc. turned out to be less important than the experience of armed struggle. Those who displayed military ability would by natural process acquire political responsibility and should be allowed to exercise it.

The guerrilla movement begins by creating unity within itself around the most urgent military tasks, which have already become political tasks, a unity of non-party elements and of all the parties represented among the *guerrilleros*, the most decisive political choice is

the Clausewitz of the Third

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The Euboeans who stayed at home

By David Ridgway

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The Euboeans were the first Greeks to revive commercial relations with the non-Greek world at the end of the post-Mycenaean Dark Age. They were trading with the indigenous Iron Age inhabitants of Campania and Etruria early in the eighth century BC, and these pre-colonial exchanges were soon put on a firmer footing with the establishment of a permanent Euboean home at Pithekoussai (Lacco Ameno d'Ischia), within sight of the Italian mainland at the north end of the Bay of Naples. Pithekoussai acted as a Western clearing-house for the advanced technology, literacy and new ideas of all kinds brought from Greece and Syria, where Euboeans had had a stake since the late ninth century in the multi-national emporium of Al Mina at the mouth of the Orontes.

Appreciation of Euboea's vital role in ending the isolation of early Greece is derived primarily from the findings of post-war archaeology. It was not until 1966 that the excavator of Pithekoussai, Giorgio Buchner, felt able to declare bluntly that "with the possession of the base of Al Mina in the East and that of Pithekoussai in the West, the Euboeans were, from about 775 to 700 ac, the masters of the trade between the Eastern Mediterranean and Central Italy". This being the case, we might be forgiven for expecting to read ancient and modern accounts of later Euboean developments, comparable with those attained by Athens and Corinth. There are no such accounts, and it is clear that there were no such developments. The reason seems to be concealed in the ancient literary references to what Oswyn Murray has defined as a "gentleman's war", fought – apparently around 700 – between the two main Euboean towns, Chalcis and Eretria, for possession of the Lelantine Plain. Three centuries later, Thucydides recalled that "the rest of the Greek world also divided in alliance with one side or the other" in this conflict – which suggests that eighteenth-century Euboean affairs were important enough to evoke concrete expression of aristocratic guest-friendship on the contemporary Homeric scale. We do not know who won the "Lelantine War", the evidence of archaeology indicates that Euboea's foreign trade was among the losses, and that by 700 others were already reaping the benefits of her pioneering Eastern and Western operations.

The achievements of the early Euboean navigators had been largely forgotten when Greek history came to be written, and excavation can give us no more than a pale reflection of them. Worse still, as in the case of the Phoenicians, we know more about the ninth and eighth-century Euboeans who went abroad than we do about those who stayed at home. Chalcis lies beneath the modern town of the same name, and is thus the only early Greek centre of obvious importance that has hardly been excavated at all; its territory appears to have supported substantial human occupation from at least the fourteenth century ac. In sharp contrast, the current Greek and Swiss excavations at Eretria have so far revealed no signs of life prior to the late ninth. In these tantalizing circumstances, nothing could be more welcome than definitive publication of the 1964-1970 excavations conducted by the British School at Athens near Lefkandi, strategically – and perhaps uncomfortably – situated on the coast halfway between Chalcis and Eretria.

Lefkandi is revealed in this highly technical report as a major Bronze Age and Iron Age centre of which only a very small portion has been opened. The present pair of volumes describe, illustrate and interpret the results relating to the original object of the excavation: the Iron Age settlement, accompanied by a few earlier and later phases and excavated in collaboration with the Greek Archaeological Service. In due course, a second instalment will account for the earlier periods attested beneath the Iron Age levels: a large and intensively occupied Late Bronze Age settlement and, below this again, further evidence for Early and Middle Bronze Age habitation.

In round figures, the period represented to differing degrees on the component sites described in *Lefkandi I* extends from 1100 to 700 ac, and is divided into four approximately dated phases: Submycenaean (1100-1050), Protogeometric (1050-900), Sub-Protogeometric (900-750) and Late Geometric (750-700), with subdivisions between 1050 and 750. This somewhat arcane terminology is based on the classification of stratified pottery, which provides the essential framework of stylistic development for the reliable association (at Lefkandi or elsewhere) of suitably diagnosed pieces with items of known date. The recognition and deployment of ceramic material in this way – and in this massive quantity – required meticulous attention to detail coupled with the breadth of vision that keeps the wood as well as the trees in sight at all times: rare and unfashionable qualities, combined to brilliant effect in the late Vincent Desborough's critical study of the pottery in the Submycenaean – Sub-Protogeometric range (1100-750), submitted to the editors only four weeks before his death in July 1978.

Eastern and Western preferences for particular types of Euboean pottery can now be compared in greater detail with the goods available at home. The sustained popularity of Euboean skyphoi (drinking-cups) abroad is thus seen to be even more striking than it was before. Some of the exported examples will have belonged to emigrants, while others were surely articles of trade in their own right; perhaps we should consider the potential relevance of this most personal of vase-forms to the consumption of a specifically Euboean beverage – like the tea which brought its own specialized drinking equipment from China to Europe in the seventeenth century AD. Meanwhile, Desborough's analysis of the skyphos-type with pendent concentric semi-circles painted between its hand-

les is especially informative: favoured throughout Sub-Protogeometric, it had already been developed before 900 in Late Protogeometric – and developed moreover at Lefkandi or in its surrounding region. The Lefkandiian against which the overseas occurrences of this and of related types can be gauged and further assessed in the new light shed by items imported to Lefkandi. From the Protogeometric phase onwards, in fact, a number of finds bear witness to reciprocity of contact with northern Greece, the Islands, Attica, Cyprus and the Levant; most remarkably, the appearance of a Syro-Palestinian juglet in a late eleventh-century tomb pre-dates the Euboean presence at Al Mina by two centuries.

The old word "Sub-Protogeometric" accurately reflects an odd situation. Between 900 and 750, the output of the Lefkandi potters was extraordinarily unenterprising. While new Early and Middle Geometric styles were being invented in other parts of Greece, notably Athens, the Lefkandi potters were content to use and to export what can only be classified as devolved Protogeometric wares. Far from implying an inward-looking or lethargic society, this ceramic conservatism actually prompts the conclusion that, in the period indicated, the Euboeans had chosen – or had been constrained to find – more profitable ways of occupying their time at home than elsewhere.

Significantly, a context dated around 900 yielded fragments of crucibles and gold wire moulds: foundry refuse, which shows that metal was being melted on the site in preparation for sophisticated casting. On this basis, Hector Catling argues controversially for continuous development in local metallurgy, and against reimportation of bronze-working expertise to Greece at the end of the Dark Age. Neither model precludes the presence at Lefkandi of a bronze-smith with Eastern experience and perhaps other evidence for an outstanding degree of prosperity that lasted there until the late ninth century. To date, no contemporary centre on the Greek mainland has produced anything like the material wealth attested at Lefkandi in this phase: impressive quantities of gold (including ear-rings of Macedonian and Phoenician origin), a mass of Egyptianizing figurines, beads of

amber and crystal, vessels of faience and bronze, and a Cypriot bronze mace-head. For good measure, a terracotta centaur (divided between two early ninth-century tombs) points to Cyprus for the method of its manufacture and to Thessaly as the homeland of its subject; this unique figure is one of the most memorable surviving pieces of early Greek sculpture.

After about 825, occupation at Lefkandi continues on a reduced scale until hurried abandonment and final destruction around 600 – Lefkandi was presumably a casualty of the Lelantine War. By 750, the persistent Protogeometric tradition in pottery had at last been supplanted by the eclectic but distinctive Euboean Late Geometric wares familiar at Al Mina and Pithekoussai. No Late Geometric graves have been found in the Boardman settlement with the frank warning that the classes to which they belong are better represented in the Greek and Swiss excavations at Eretria, which comes to prominence as Lefkandi declines. The latter feature could be taken as confirmation of the Swiss excavators' theory that Lefkandi is the "Old Eretria" of the ancient written sources. A population movement (of 15 km) in the late ninth century from Lefkandi to "New Eretria" is certainly feasible on the archaeological evidence presently available from both centres; the possibility that nothing more formal was involved emerges from Mervyn Popham's prudent distinction between internal migration and the transfer of a name. When the Augustan geographer Strabo attributed the foundation of Pithekoussai to Chalcidians and Eretrians, which Eretria did he have in mind? We still do not know. By his time, could not "Chalcidians and Eretrians" be no more than a literary synonym for Euboeans from anywhere – including those from a site long since deserted, and hence nameless?

The editors' historical conclusions are more cautious than this reviewer's, and understandably so: throughout, an almost embarrassing volume of material was recovered from a very small proportion of the whole site. Although many hypotheses are thoughtfully reviewed, there is simply not enough internal evidence to account for the apparent contraction of Lefkandi after 825 and for its subsequent slow decline towards 700: "It would be wise to suspend further conjecture until current excavations at Eretria have further clarified the earlier history of that site, and until something is known of the extent and development of Chalcis at the stage we have been considering." Too true; and there is little to add. But it would be surprising indeed if circumstances on the home front were unaffected by the progress of foreign ventures: 825 is the conventional date for the establishment of the Euboean base at Al Mina; by 750, Pithekoussai had attained its largest size, and was demonstrably capable of supporting a considerable permanent community of metal-workers, potters and traders. Lefkandi based at the mouth of the Orontes in the late ninth century might well have been the first Euboean to wear of the good prospects in the West; and decline of Lefkandi be the result – if only in part – of increasing emigration to the Bay of Naples? However crude, this suggestion does at least try to answer Paul Auberson's famous question about eighth-century Euboea, still open after six years: what is the relationship, chronological and otherwise, between the contemporary phenomena of major upheaval at home and the assumption of major commitments abroad?

It will be clear from the foregoing that the British School at Athens has placed historians of early Greece yet further in its debt. To my knowledge, no one has ever suggested that pottery typology could or should be translated without further ado into historical, social and economic narrative. Nevertheless, where (as at Lefkandi) pottery constitutes by far the most abundant category of evidence retrieved, it provides precisely those basic notions of relative order and absolute time that are indispensable to the achievement of loftier aims. *Lefkandi I* is a massive contribution to the better understanding of an area and a subject of profound significance for the history of the whole Mediterranean. From the seventh century onwards, no small part of Euboea's early promise was fulfilled by the native peoples of Campania, Latium and Etruria: their unique degree of Hellenization owes much to the second and third generation of Euboean emigrants who were left to their own devices at Pithekoussai and Cumae after the events symbolized by the destruction of Lefkandi. We are beginning, at last, to appreciate the tradition to which they were heirs.

support systems of these ancient settlements. But is this interpretation of the archaeological facts the correct one? Here one must regretfully say that Helms's theories are not the only ones which fit the facts and often not the most plausible. Nevertheless the arguments are presented in such a way that the reader can easily distinguish fact from fantasy and can decide for himself how much of the story to believe.

Although this stimulating and controversial study of Jawa will not convince many, and although its conclusions must be treated with caution, Svend Helms has written a fascinating book. He has given us the first comprehensive description of one of the best-preserved and most enigmatic archaeological sites in the Near East, and his reconstruction and analysis of its remarkable water systems are particularly valuable. In addition we must be very grateful to him for discussing many important questions which are all too often ignored by more pedestrian archaeologists.

With his essay on "The Flexible Mind" in John Wood's and Harold G. Coward's *Humanities in the Present Day* (1979). The Festschrift includes contributions from B. D. Meritt (with whom McGreggor worked closely on *Athenian Tribute Lists*) on "Kleon's Assessment of Tribute to Athens", from Harold B. Mattingley on "The Themistokles Decree from Troezen: Transmission and Stages of the Text", and from K. J. Dover on "The Colloquial Stratum in Classical Attic Prose".

Credentials of a chronicler

By Jeremy Catto

J. N. N. PALMER (Editor):
Froissart: Historian
203pp. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell.
£30.
0 85115 146 9

It is in the nature of great events to generate a mythology: so it has proved with the Persian wars of Greece, the French Revolution, even the Second World War. Sooner or later their epic and tragic potential is given a classic form, and a myth is created: at first a life-giving stimulus to the historian and his public, then a sustaining orthodoxy, and at last, however brilliant, an intellectual detritus, which obstructs understanding with an abiding deposit of preconceptions. For the power of the myth-makers commonly lasts far longer, in attenuated or popularized form, than their reputation as accurate historians: Herodotus' Xerxes, De Thou's Catherine de Medici, Micheli's Robespierre or even John Reed's Lenin have been superseded, exposed or radically modified, but their impression remains.

J. N. N. Palmer and his collaborators now draw our attention to another myth-maker on the grand scale, Jean Froissart, the only contemporary to see the long struggle of Plantagenet and Valois as a single historical theme: a great river with innumerable tributary episodes, with eddies and backwaters, rapids, and one or two cataracts, its outcome not in sight. Everybody's fourteenth century, thereafter, has been Froissart's: Caxton's, the humanists', Hollinshed's, Rapin's, Hume's, Chateaubriand's, and Scott's. Only after 1870, with the critical editions of Lucie (still incomplete) and Kervyn de Lettenhove, was Froissart's account systematically compared with documents from the now accessible archives of European states, and less ambitious annals. The result was sobering. The times and places of many episodes were shown to be impossible, the motives of his characters duller than he said; even his named eye-witnesses proved unreliable. What Froissart could contribute to a sound chronography of the fourteenth century was limited. On the other hand, he could not simply be ignored, as some of his stories, like his account of John of Gaunt's capture of Castile's patronal shrine at Compostela, were remarkably to the point. So professional historians have relegated him to an indeterminate limbo, from which Mr Palmer and his colleagues, in these ten essays, have set out to rescue him.

Their work has been well worth while, because Froissart has so much to tell, often unconsciously, about the participants in war, and something too about the princes and councillors who tried to direct them. We need not follow John Henneman's suggestion, in his acute analysis of Charles V of France, that Froissart's future reputation hangs on what he has to say about "the behaviour of élites in a military and political context": the élites dance to Froissart's tune and behave as he makes them behave for his own literary purpose. For, as the editor and some of the other contributors make clear, there was a literary purpose, and constructive criticism must start by sorting out the genre of the *Chroniques*, their audience, and the circumstances of their composition.

Not all the contributors, it must be said, are prepared to take Froissart on any but their own terms, as a more or less corrupt historical source: for J. W. Sherborne, it is enough to demonstrate his propensity for the fabulous and his failure to seek "some residual element of factual truth or of a feasible political interpretation". Even Pierre Tucco-Cha's in his sensitive study of Froissart's Pyrenean tour applies the same criterion: he more generously, concluding that the chronicler must have caught the authentic conversation of his informants, the Duke of Lion and the Count of Flanders, but as other contributors show, neither Froissart's realism nor his elaborate credentials can be taken as evidence of accurate reporting. In the end, if Froissart, as Luce started out by stating, "is a world", it is not the world of the historical Black Prince or Bertrand du

Guesclin. It is the world of the artist himself.

The most significant work to be done on the *Chroniques*, then, is on the text, and three essays converge on a more radical view of its construction. Palmer shows that none of the various versions can have been written before about 1390. The surviving versions of the text of Book One, which differ both in bias and in the information they contain, are not successive revisions of a single text; they are separate chronicles made up of selections from the same body of material, made presumably for different patrons or readerships; and the normal rules of textual criticism do not apply. George Diller shows why: Froissart was writing (or more likely dictating) as a story-teller, with all the tricks of a raconteur: "... for I haven't yet got the princes of Blois out of the king of England's prison of preconceptions. For the power of the myth-makers commonly lasts far longer, in attenuated or popularized form, than their reputation as accurate historians: Herodotus' Xerxes, De Thou's Catherine de Medici, Micheli's Robespierre or even John Reed's Lenin have been superseded, exposed or radically modified, but their impression remains."

As such he was not concerned to reconcile his often contradictory accounts, so much as to retell the stories in the form most appropriate to a particular audience. Many of his readers must have been well informed, but English and French naturally remembered things differently. And as Richard Barber's important study shows, Froissart had always been known as a performer: a *dictor*, or poet, to one early patron, a *spreker*, or master of the spoken word to another. The poet was a well-known figure to the Anglo-French aristocracy in the 1360s and 1370s. The historian came later.

If Palmer, Diller and Barber are correct, the writing of the *Chroniques* becomes comprehensible. Many of the errors in the Anglo-French war were less and less frequent after 1380, and ceased altogether ten years later in a

generally convenient, if hardly glorious peace. Richard II of England was not interested in the traditional rivalries, while it was becoming evident that Charles VI of France was insane. In this disappointing world, the glorious campaigns of Crécy and Poitiers, the Breton civil war and the Spanish intervention, the free companies and the French *revanche* were sweet, fading memories. This was Froissart's opportunity. He had personal memories of some episodes, and found more material from earlier historians, especially Jean le Bel and the Chondos Herald. He had probably tried his hand at history already. His unusual capacity to combine early realism with fantasy and romance had been demonstrated in his last early poem *Melior*, to which an early journey to Scotland had contributed some local colour. Tales of the recent past, concentrating on military exploits, would have an eager, nostalgic public: as passions were still burning and some memories long, different selections of material and a variable bias were only tactful. Patrons were flattered, prejudices indulged. Naturally the *Chroniques*, in their several versions, were an immediate success. Froissart eventually added more books, taking the story up to 1400. But the first book was his real triumph, for there he had created a brilliant, almost Proustian world out of the events of his youth. With real historical insight, he treated the wars as a single theme to which all contemporary events were subordinate. Nobody since has been able to see them in any other way. A great historical myth, only partly false, was born.

Mr Palmer and his colleagues have enabled us to see Froissart in perspective at last. It is a welcome achievement.

Wealth before wisdom

By Nicholas Davidson

ROBERT FINLAY:
Politics in Renaissance Venice
308pp. Benn. £13.95.
0 510 00085 1

For many years, historians of Renaissance Venice have been divided. Some believe that the city's government was stable and well-meaning, others that it was corrupt and tyrannical. Robert Finlay has now brought the two points of view together: he believes that it was stable because it was corrupt.

This is a neat explanation. Appointment to office was normally decided by a ballot of the Great Council; those appointed were naturally concerned that if they were to offend any section of that Council they would lose the next election. So compromise in government was encouraged by faction in the patriciate who made up the Council: and the dishonesty which characterized the Council was effectively defused by the frequent elections. As an eighteenth-century observer noted: "Here they fight not with blood but with ballots."

Dr Finlay's account is largely based on the interpretations of contemporary diarists, and especially on the Diaries of Marino Sanuto, whose massive manuscript – printed in fifty-eight volumes – allows us to view Venetian politics through the eyes of a contemporary participant. They certainly make more compelling reading than the arid records in the State Archive. Especially interesting are their discussions of patrician motive in the Council: Sanuto explains how members of the twenty-four "old houses" – supposedly descendants of the city's founders – voted against members of the "new houses", large houses – with more than about forty members on the Council – would vote against small ones, and the rich against the poor. And he explains the significant political change which followed the economic disasters of the War of the League of Cambrai, as sale of office became an important source of gov-

ernment revenue, and the sale of votes an essential source of income for an impoverished patriciate. After 1509, office was therefore dominated by the rich, rather than the competent, and real power was concentrated in the smaller executive bodies, whose members were frequently not elected at all.

Sanuto in fact dominates this book, one fifth of whose 288 pages of text cite him as their only source. But is he entirely reliable? As Finlay himself remarks, he was not well considered in his own lifetime: "In all likelihood, most of his contemporaries regarded Sanuto as an indelicate troublemaker", "cranky and intemperate". His picture is thus "uninfluenced by the reality of Venetian politics, for which he had slight sympathy or understanding". Certainly his own career was unsuccessful, and the Diaries suggest that his opinions were coloured by a growing sense of failure. And what were his sources? Finlay tells us that Sanuto received material from friends, and had privileged access to official records, (as well as a government pension from 1530); but he never quite tells us why. He says that the Diaries were "well-known", but not who had access to them. Were they used by informants for their own advantage? And how complete are they? Sanuto certainly avoided references to events which embarrassed his friends or himself. He had little experience of administration in Venice, and tells us little about it; but since he was disappointed by his failure to be elected, he tells us a great deal about the electoral machinery, and the unprincipled motives of the electors who opposed him. Perhaps his jaundiced reactions affected his sense of proportion.

Our knowledge of Sanuto's character should therefore make us hesitate to trust him, and it seems legitimate to ask whether his picture is entirely convincing even on its own terms. He emphasizes the importance of family connections in politics, for example, and especially the hostility between old and new houses. Andrea Gritti, a member of a new house, was certainly opposed by members of old houses in the dual election of 1523 – but also by Alvise Priuli, from another new house. Is it possible to explain

this by showing that the Gritti were a small clan with only thirty votes in 1527 – and the Priuli a large one – forty-six voters in the same year? But they were both opposed in 1523 by Leonardo Mocenigo, a member, like Gritti, of a new, small house. After his election, Gritti often worked against electoral corruption with Marino Morosini, a member of a large, old house; is it possible to explain this alliance of large with small, new with old, by the fact that both were listed as patrons to the State in 1511 after suffering economically in the wars? Why then was Gritti joined in his campaign against corruption by Francesco di Filippo Foscari, who had been wealthy enough in 1512 to loan 1000 ducats to the State?

The problem is that Sanuto's categories of explanation are unwieldy: framed in terms of prior bloc commitments, they often miss the complexity of individual motivation. They were inspired by a desire to discover the key to electoral success – yet shaped by a scepticism towards the ambitions of those who opposed him. His interest in the machinery of the appointment left him little room to consider its purpose, and his explanations seem as a result to be of limited application only: Finlay admits that "There is, in fact, no echo of the clan division within the Senate or executive councils, no sign that it touched the field of programs and policies." Government by compromise is perhaps not necessarily good government after all.

Politics in Renaissance Venice will serve an important function as an account of Sanuto's view of Venetian history, but its wider value is limited by a failure to distance itself effectively from Sanuto himself. It often looks, in fact, as if the elaborate voting systems did break up the influence of family factions: it is no great surprise to learn that between 1507 and 1527, members of old houses won "about 40 per cent" of Council elections when we know already that they made up "35 per cent" of the patriciate. Participants can rarely assess the developments of their own lifetime; Sanuto's scepticism allowed him to find an explanation for everything – but perhaps it inhibited his understanding.

Who engineered the invitation to Prince Charles Edward to come secretly to Paris in January 1744? Then, after the failure of their attempt in March to send an invasion force to Maldon in Essex, the French concentrated on the war in Flanders and became lukewarm in their support for the prince, but they have foreknowledge of his intention to go to Scotland alone in 1745? McIllynn concludes that they did not.

The French decision not to repeat their support for Charles Edward in August 1745 was, in the author's view, an error of judgment. It was human enough, but the French had allowed 1744 to take the edge off their appetite for a Jacobite diversion. By the time they decided to act it was too late, and they and the Jacobites found themselves in a vicious circle: Louis XV delayed sending troops until he could be sure Charles Edward was victorious, and Charles Edward could only be victorious if the French sent troops. Consequently the rumour of a French landing, which was again abortive, in December deflected Cumberland only briefly from his northward pursuit of the Jacobites.

The French had been mesmerized by the apparent absence of an active Jacobite party in England and influenced by a desire not to give offence to their Protestant allies in Germany. They mistakenly believed that the restoration of the Stuarts was something that could be achieved on the cheap (though Louis XV did send troops until he could be sure Charles Edward was victorious, and Charles Edward could only be victorious if the French sent troops). They also had other irons in the fire in a war that thrived on diversionary activities. McIllynn sheds much light on French contacts with leading Jacobites, some, like Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, who came over from England and others, like Walsh and O'Hegarty, who were influential ship-owners based in Nantes and La Rochelle.

Evidence of French errors of judgment and dilatoriness leads McIllynn to delve into the workings of the French governmental machine and to probe the personalities and prejudices of the king and his chief ministers. In the least satisfactory chapter of his book, he begins inauspiciously with an inaccurate list of the four secretaries of state. He makes heavy weather of Louis XV's elegant way of intimating to men like Maurepas and Bernis that they had been promoted to the rank of ministers of state. He states inaccurately that Louis XV always kept princes of the blood out of the council and that much of the detailed work of the latter was done in committees. He has completely misunderstood the reasons given by Michel Antoine for the conflict between Orry and Amelot in 1737 over precedence in the Conseil des Dépêches. Can one really argue that the marquis d'Argenson's enmity for England dated from his period as French ambassador in Portugal? The statement that Philip V was Louis XV's son-in-law (p. 39) is presumably a slip of the pen.

One weak chapter and some minor blemishes cannot, however, obscure the value of a well-written book which cogently explains the problems and dilemmas that beset Louis XV and his ministers when they viewed the Jacobite intervention in the context of a wider European and colonial war. They gave up hope too soon in 1744 and they gave support too late in 1745. That "Protestant wind" on March 6-7, 1744 determined the course of events more than did the intricacies of the royal administration.

The toads of wisdom

By James Kirkup

TIERNÓ MONÉNEMBO:
Les Crapauds-Brousse
186pp. Paris: Seuil.

There is a Peuhl legend which says that when God created the world he preferred the toad above all other creatures, believing it to be the one animal destined to achieve physical and spiritual perfection. The legend does not tell us how the toad came to be accorded and thus deprived of its miraculous metamorphosis. But even to this day it is believed by certain African tribes that the toad is the living repository of the greatest book of wisdom — the one that contains the key to an insoluble mystery, how to find a remedy for death.

This is the universal theme on which Tiernó Monénembo has based his first novel, an African allegory that is both earthy and poetic, satirical and compassionate. The author is a young West African born, like Camera Laye, in Guinea. He has some of Laye's extraordinary natural powers of description and fantasy, yet nourished by an acute observation of contemporary realities in West Africa. Monénembo prints a disclaimer: "The places and personages of this novel must be considered as existing only in my imagination." But to anyone familiar with Guinea, the city he brings to such vivid life is obviously Conakry, and the sinister tyrant Sâ Matrak a composite portrait of certain present or former African rulers. We are not surprised to learn that, like Laye, the author went into exile in 1969, living in Senegal and the Ivory Coast before reaching France, where he is now writing a doctoral thesis in biochemistry. This novel also curiously resembles in some ways Laye's last work, *The Guardian of the Word*, which also featured a vile and monstrous cannibalistic ruler, the King of Sosso.

However, Laye can be said to write a classical and even scholarly French. Tiernó Monénembo is much more relaxed and contemporary in his narrative and conversational style, in this respect resembling another new francophone author from Africa, Sony Labou Tansi, whose *L'Élat Honteux* recently appeared from the same publisher. Like Monénembo, Tansi can almost be said to re-create French, or to write his own kind of uniquely African French, often picturesque, realistic, humorous, slangy, using many native expressions, and always bubblingly alive. They might be called, with other young African novelists, the Célines or the Queneaus of modern African writing, with a touch of Rabelais and Jarry.

Monénembo certainly reminds me of both Céline and Rabelais. His hero is a not very prepossessing specimen of African manhood, physically speaking, and the author gives a merciless portrait of Dioulé: but the young man is highly intelligent, so much so that his government has sent him to Budapest to study electrical engineering. With typical African ease, he soon picks up Hungarian, though he is not so lucky with Hungarian blondes, who look scornfully upon his unattractive, ill-dressed body.

But on his return to his native land, Dioulé can expect a good position, for does he not possess a first-class diploma in electrical engineering from a European institution? However, his technical ability is ignored by the government, and because he can speak Hungarian he is put in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he spends his days drafting reports no one ever reads, and listening to the scandal-mongering chatter of girl secretaries in smart western dress, who make no secret of their contempt for him.

His official position entitles him to a fairly comfortable house — though not on the *corralle*, the best part of town — and to a decrepit car. These

amenities, and promises of luxury gifts from abroad, enable him to marry, against his scandalized traditional father's wishes, a beautiful girl, Râhi, whom he has met at one of the endless champagne parties enjoyed by the local *jeunesse dorée*. They wear western clothes, drink alcohol, eat forbidden foods, talk taboo politics, and imitate smart Parisian life as best they can, with nightly *pantouzes*, sexy dancing and uninhibited farting competitions. These young bucks and their bored womenfolk plot to overthrow the government of the tyrant Sâ Matrak.

But there are traitors and spies in their midst, and soon life becomes more and more difficult for Dioulé and his friends. He becomes involved in shady business, and then in murder, with the frightening hit-man Daouda, an inhuman creature with a totally expressionless face. The lively champagne parties and wife-swappings are no more. Terror descends upon the city's muddy lanes and crowded slums, and on the houses and villas of the rich, too. Dioulé, his Dioulé, arrested on trumped-up charges and he is incarcerated in the "Tombes," a grisly prison on the outskirts of town, notorious for its tortures and executions. Dioulé's wife, Râhi, tries in vain to reach him, to get news of him, for she knows that no one comes out of the Tombes alive. Daouda rapes her and takes her as his unwilling mistress.

Sharply shocking

By David Montrose

JOHN WILLIAM CORRINGTON:
The Southern Reporter
192pp. Louisiana State University Press. \$9.95.
0 8071 0869 3

On the face of it, John William Corrington's third collection of stories positively brandishes its Dixieland connections. There is the book's title, the identity of its publisher, the quotation from Faulkner in the blurb. Four of the five stories are set in the South; even the exception — "Nothing Succeeds" — features an elderly New Orleans lawyer transplanted to California in search of a missing heir. But Corrington is no more a regional writer than was Faulkner; his South functions, like Yoknapatawpha County, as a backdrop against which wider themes are played.

Corrington's principal preoccupation is the Faulknerian one of the past intruding into the present. Typically, his protagonists are old, unable to come to terms with the modern world. René Landry, the elderly lawyer in "Nothing Succeeds", cannot forget his wife's death in childbirth, while Bob Sentell, the elderly lawyer in "A Day in Thy Court", cannot forget his wife's death from cancer. In "The Great Pumpkin", Mrs Twitty fantasizes about a night of adultery "long ago". Dewey Domingue, the court reporter of the title story, cannot reconcile his traditional concepts of justice with contemporary law, a subject on which Corrington — among his other accomplishments — is clearly qualified to speak.

Unfortunately, Corrington displays little of Faulkner's artistry. "The Man Who Slept with Women", for example, is an unsuccessful attempt to update the Southwestern vernacular tall-tale. Elsewhere, Corrington labours mightily and in "Nothing Succeeds" and "The Southern Reporter" over-lengthily — they are almost novellas — to be more than slick, but the reader never comes close to sharing the abiding sense of loss endured by Landry and Sentell, or Domingue's overwhelming outrage. In the two long stories especially, one gets the impression of a writer trying to endow shop-worn plots with "character study" and "significance".

Eventually, Râhi manages to escape from the city and begins the long and frightening journey towards the frontier. This part of the novel is full of remarkable descriptions of desert, savannah and equatorial forests infested by bandits who lie in wait to rob and kill those trying to escape from an unbearable life and an impossible regime. The novel ends on a note of hope, as Râhi and her companions move out of the dank, dark forest into the sunlight, and gaze towards the border.

Besides the main characters the book abounds in marvellous portraits, chief among them Dioulé's traditionalist mother and father, an inspired madman, an immense woman bartender and a youth who has managed to see the inside of the Tombes and come out alive — an intellectual, possibly a self-portrait of the author.

In this extraordinary novel of African adventures and social and political criticism, we realize that the "bush toads" of the title are the young intellectuals of Africa, often thrown into prison, tortured and executed — creatures abandoned by God. After the hero, Dioulé, disappears into the Tombes, we never see him again; but Râhi is able to be revenged at the end by shooting Daouda, the man who sent him to his death. This novel is one of the most convincing and haunting testimonies I have read by an African author.

"Nothing Succeeds" is yet another fictionalized replay of The Charles Munson Story. Corrington provides an ingenious explanation of the most gruesome aspect of the Sharon Tate murder, but the depiction of his Manson figure, Lancelot Boudress III, as a genius turned crackpot is unconvincing. "The Southern Reporter", Dewey Domingue exacts vengeance on a rapist and his sharp defence attorney, a plot sufficiently clichéd for even American TV-writers to have used it. The story is, though, the most successful in the collection; Corrington manages to suggest the despair that prompts a moralist to violence. Domingue is no crazy who sees himself as the sword of God, just a good man sickened by evil.

The remaining stories also exude an air of familiarity. "A Day in Thy Court" combines *The Old Man and the Sea* and Quentin's section from *The Sound and the Fury*. During a solo fishing-trip, Sentell meditates on his wife's death and the prospect of his own; he, as she did, has terminal cancer. In the final paragraph, Sentell cheats The Thing, falling drunk from his boat and drowning.

Death is, of course, a useful device for tidying loose endings. It is employed as such in "The Great Pumpkin", where four Halloween trick-or-treaters terrorize an elderly couple. After beating up the husband and raping the wife, they receive retribution via a sawn-off shotgun. This kind of sharp shock is, these days, standard practice for the short story. And what with a car-crash, rape, suicide, and deaths by assorted natural and artificial means, Corrington's characters generally stand the chance of getting through unscathed.

RODERIC JEFFRIES:
Unseasoned End
199pp. Collins. £6.25.
0 00 231867 9

Inspector Alvarez undertakes yet another investigation among the English expatriates on Mallorca. This time it concerns the apparent suicide of an ageing rich widow who leaves all her possessions to a young gigolo. Roderic Jeffries plots neatly and writes pleasingly and unostentatiously, though by now he must have, in successive books, almost exterminated the English colony on the island.

T. J. Blyden

Troubled waters

By Louis Allen

MEIRA CHAND:
Last Quadrant
194pp. John Murray. £6.95.
0 7195 3826 2

The last quadrant is a meteorological term, the segment of a typhoon before the storm surge it releases is hurled upon the land. It is Meira Chand's equivalent of the English country-house weekend. She gathers a group of characters in a setting rather more exotic than the Home Counties — a Kobe orphanage — and makes them confront the cataclysm. It sieves them through; some are killed, others have their lives changed.

The oddly spelled Eva Kraig has stayed in Japan to run the orphanage after war-time internment. She's smooth, rational, efficient and consumed by love for the founding Akiko. Akiko has grown up to be her helper, but is haunted by the thought of her unknown mother, a corrupt bar-girl who has had her by an American soldier during the Occupation. Another helper is the Irish nun, Sister Elaine, who has been sent by her order to Japan to recover from the shock of seeing her sister and two children barbarously destroyed by a terrorist bomb. And there are other expatriates of the Kobe community: Arthur Wilcox, who has loved Kyo, Akiko's mother, in the distant past and is now an old man, recently retired, pottering about desperately, writing the history of his club; Geraldine, socializing wife of the moneygrubbing Nate Cooper, patronizing the orphanage with oppressive charity, irritably putting up with her senile mother, Maud Bingham, and sensing in herself the assaults of age; and a group of children, of whom one, the resentful Kenichi, stands out as not only recalcitrant but as a Korean, with the chip on the shoulder which that can mean in modern Japan.

The book's psychological trigger is the appearance of Kyo, ill and growing old, come to find her daughter so that someone will care for her in old age. Akiko, who has speculated endlessly about her, is horrified by the sleazy underworld of bars and pimps to which her mother belongs. She returns to the orphanage in dismay but is pursued by Kyo, who intends to wrest her from Eva.

It is not discrimination, as any Westerner would immediately say. It is simply a fact of Japanese life. The foreigner is always the foreigner, the Japanese is always a Japanese.

Is this just a new version of the old inscrutable stereotype? No, it's much subtler than that, but it's significant that the future which finally beckons to Akiko comes from America, and not from Japan.

Front-line findings

By Nicholas Best

ALAN JUDD:
A Breed of Heroes
288pp. Hodder & Stoughton. £6.95.
0 340 26334 2

It is unfair of his publishers to invoke Evelyn Waugh in the blurb of Alan Judd's *A Breed of Heroes*. Most authors, and first novelists in particular, have enough to do without trying to live up to the beast of Combe Florey as well.

In any case, the name that comes more readily to mind is Isherwood, for this is the work of a camera, an over-the-shoulder view of an army subaltern's four months' service in Northern Ireland. There is no plot as such. It is more a series of impressions, a bleak, dispassionate study of an awful posting, in which every aspect of a soldier's life is examined without frills and without fuss.

At one point the subaltern hero wonders whether he ought to keep a diary, and it seems clear that the author — who himself served several years in Northern Ireland — must have kept some sort of journal of events, if only in his head. Many of the incidents he records would not have to be written down to be remembered — the cup of urine offered

Then the typhoon strikes. Arthur Wilcox's car breaks down outside the orphanage and he takes refuge there. The typhoon, which was supposed to be passing over Osaka, now heads directly for Kobe and Arthur helps Eva move the children uphill to what seems a safer spot, the Cooper house. It is safer, but only on the top floor.

At this point the book changes key. Typhoon 21 is a sentimental loosener: it kills off the two incubuses of the book, brings together Akiko and the young American Daniel in a promise of love, and even offers the emptied Arthur Wilcox a Baden-Powellish renewal of life in which he will help the orphans start a cub pack.

There is a deep discrepancy between the delicate and sophisticated sensory observation of Meira Chand's style and the ultimately sentimental use to which the narrative puts it. She also at times seems ill at ease with dialogue. The coarse-fibered Nate is made to say "I am neither Noah nor possess the Ark!... But up we must go without a doubt. Up, in fact, to our eagle's nest. There we shall be safe." Some of the description, however, is sensitive and powerful. The poetic quality of her prose, so evident in her first novel, *The Gossamer Fly*, re-appears here with the same sensory conviction. Perfumes and clouds are "fleshy", and Maud's lips sink on toothless gums "gathered like slack leather". The typhoon itself is seen in terms of both abstract evil and concrete disaster.

The book is set in Japan, but it is not, except in rare moments, really about the Japanese. Meira Chand is half-Swiss and half-Indian and has lived in Japan for nearly twenty years. This experience serves her well: her characters are from the world of expatriates and mixed blood, *konkeito*, aware of themselves on the fringe of a world which consents to them with difficulty and never takes them into itself. Akiko realizes this, without moralizing.

Goodwin's virtuoso technique manages to convey not just colour and light but temperature: the shimmering heat of the midday sun on the beach at Amalfi, or Cairo in the dust of the bazaar, the pink and white marble of its Moorish Gothic bleached out almost to the white of the paper. An astonishing water-colour entitled "Carnival" (painted in either Trinidad or Venezuela) shows a warm tropical night, black as ink, lit up by a fizz of lights, a shadowy presence of trees and a hint of crowds and laughter. These water-colours show a skilful combination of detail and breadth, of Pre-Raphaelite sharp-focus realism with Turnerian atmosphere — distant silhouette set off by branch, blossom or boat in close-up.

Goodwin was taught by Arthur Hughes and Ford Madox Brown and an early work shows children gazing at vibrantly blue bluebells in a suddenly green greensward, every bit as shocking as the colour combinations of his masters. He was taken up by Ruskin and travelled with him to Italy; a drawing of Assisi is proudly inscribed "Drawn when with Ruskin who introduced me to the subject saying that 'these were the Fathers of all the Flying Buttruses'." He painted in Switzerland in the footsteps of Turner; he painted quaint tourist haunts like Bruges, Capri, Mont St Michel (but wrote "I think that for piled up picturesque Assisi takes the cake"). He pictured the great English cathedral, light, outlined against the sky. He loved old English towns like Rye, Hastings, Clovelly and Whitby, often choosing to work from strained viewpoints, very low or very high, or contriving compositions now associated with the wide-angle lens. His views of India present it with a sense of scale and theatre later emulated by the wide screen. The minarets of Benares by night shimmer silver, lit up by the light of a blazing pyre; the Ta Mahal is seen across the river, not by moonlight but in the heat of the day, beneath a brilliantly expansive sky. Surprisingly for a Ruskinian, he preferred later in life to paint not from nature but from recollection, based on old sketches. "I can paint Switzerland better when it is a

in the guise of tea, the pile of earth trails splashed across a wall after an explosion, the knee going into the groin as a British private works off a little aggro on the side.

The most telling passage in the book, one that will strike an immediate chord with anyone who has ever served in Ulster, deals with a group of Catholic women surrounding a gang of soldiers in a cul-de-sac. The women have done nothing wrong. There is no law against them surging forward, in and around the soldiers, who for various reasons have been ordered to stay put. Yet if the women continue to surge, sooner or later there will be a death. This is the classic junior commander's dilemma: the business of whether or not to open fire, of what to do if your orders to the crowd are not obeyed. Judd pitches it exactly right when the young lieutenant in his own incident is heavily fined for failing to command officer for failing to keep a few heads in to keep the situation under control.

We are into the thirteenth year of the present-day Troubles, and this is the first serious novel to be written about it by someone who has actually soldiered there. As such, it deserves all the attention it can get; and it is written in a surprisingly digestible form, with irony but little bitterness. The result is a very creditable literary debut.

In the steps of Turner

By Julian Treuherz

Albert Goodwin, 1845-1932
Bolton Art Gallery

By 1900 it was nothing new for an English watercolourist to paint the skyline of Venice seen from across the lagoon, San Giorgio silhouetted on the left, boats artistically arranged on the right, the campanile shimmering in the distance and, overhead, the sky drenched in a fiery orange sunset. Yet Albert Goodwin could produce something magical out of these hackneyed ingredients, even with the shade of his beloved Turner looking on.

Goodwin's watercolours can be seen in an exhibition currently at the Bolton Art Gallery, and also visiting Canterbury, Newcastle, Leicester and London (Sotheby's Belgravia). He was born two generations later than Turner, and was younger than topographical painters such as Prout, Roberts and Stanfield. He continued working into the twentieth century. To the lover of classic English water-colour, with its limpid translucency, Goodwin's work is impure: he uses bodycolour, stipple, pastel, ink outline, splashing contrasts of colour and surfaces sometimes scraped with a razor or even sandpaper. To the lover of picturesque views of old European towns, with their *contadini* lounging beneath decaying Gothic stonework, Goodwin's taste is highly coloured and strongly flavoured. His preferred times of day are sunset and early morning; his skies, when not pale and subtle, stop just short of being alive and transform his towns into stage sets.

Goodwin's virtuoso technique manages to convey not just colour and light but temperature: the shimmering heat of the midday sun on the beach at Amalfi, or Cairo in the dust of the bazaar, the pink and white marble of its Moorish Gothic bleached out almost to the white of the paper. An astonishing water-colour entitled "Carnival" (painted in either Trinidad or Venezuela) shows a warm tropical night, black as ink, lit up by a fizz of lights, a shadowy presence of trees and a hint of crowds and laughter. These water-colours show a skilful combination of detail and breadth, of Pre-Raphaelite sharp-focus realism with Turnerian atmosphere — distant silhouette set off by branch, blossom or boat in close-up.

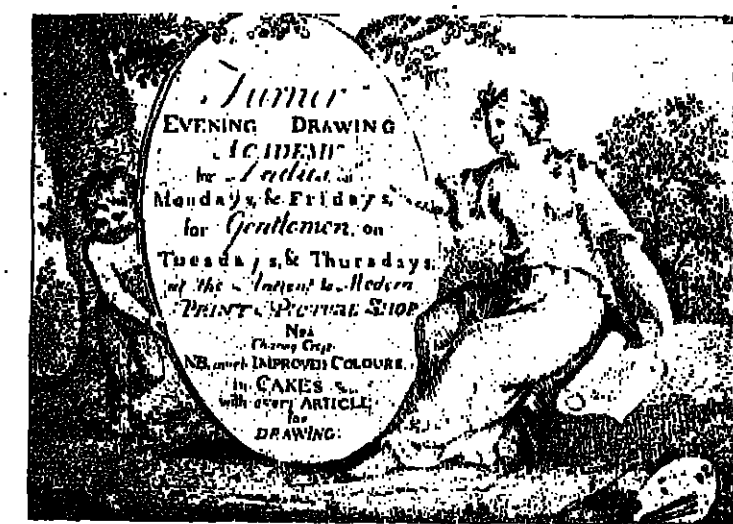
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somewhat far away memory", he wrote, choosing not to see modern improvements such as the new hotels he deplored at Lucerne.

His art has a strange, disquieting side and the exhibition contains some subjects with weirdly fatalistic undercurrents: "The Siren Sea" a shipwrecked hulk in a rocky pool, birds wheeling overhead and an enigmatic female wreath crouching on the shore, or "The Invincible Armada", a desolate heap of galleons smashed into fragments on savage rocks. He also produced several Biblical scenes in the apocalyptic manner of John Martin.

Up to the end of his life (he survived into his eighties), Goodwin

could not stop painting. In the 1920s he moved with his daughters into a new house with plain walls. Whilst they were out shopping one day he covered his bedroom with wavy stripes and sunflowers. Old oak furniture was covered in designs, and he later inset the outside walls of the house with mosaics made of bits of broken china collected from the rubbish tip. How like Gaudi; but despite his exotic visions, Goodwin was not decadent enough to be classed with the *fin de siècle* movement. He emerges from this splendid exhibition as thoroughly English, a Grand Hotel tourist, celebrating the landscape of the prosperous traveller in Europe and the still widening horizons of the Empire.



The trade card of George Turner's academy of art, which flourished between 1770 and 1800. ("Cakes" are blocks of paint.) The illustration comes from Michael Clarke's *The Tempting Prospect: A Social History of English Watercolours* (160pp, 100 black and white illustrations. British Museum Publications. £14.95. 0 7141 8016 5).

Dances to the music of time

By Richard Combs

Heaven's Gate
Odeon Cinema, Haymarket

Out of the epic tribulations of epic undertakings like *Heaven's Gate*, new trends in Hollywood policy are made. It is based on an historical event, the Johnson County War of 1892 in which immigrant settlers in Wyoming were set upon by hired killers of the cattlemen's association. And it apparently existed in script form for many years before the writer-director Michael Cimino's stock rose after *The Deer Hunter*. As a result of that film's Oscars, Cimino found himself with the enthusiastic backing of United Artists, and *Heaven's Gate* then proceeded to swallow up large areas of the West (location shooting took in three states and went on for five months), the company's finances (variously put down to the rigours of filming in the wild and to the director's expanding ambitions), and even Oxford, England, for a prologue set in Harvard in 1870. But the West was lost again when the film, some three and a half hours' long, opened in New York to vitriolic reviews, was pulled out almost immediately for re-editing, and re-opened earlier this year to no better reviews and insignificant business. The result has been a brisk rattle of new brooms in Hollywood, threatening to sweep away such extravagance and indulgence in future (*Heaven's Gate* cost thirty-five million dollars, not counting the re-vamping).

The curious thing about the film industry, however, is that it probably has a shorter historical memory than any comparable institution. Little more than a decade ago, similar pronouncements of an end to runaway budgets were being made after the success of the low-budget *Easy Rider*. Yet it was not long before costs were climbing again, to a way less

ascribable to inflation than to the lure of big returns on big films. *Heaven's Gate*, in other words, may be not so much a singular villain which broke the bank as just another turning point in a familiar cycle, another instance of the peculiarly material nature of ambition in the cinema. The dust may also settle sooner than expected and allow *Heaven's Gate* to be seen for what it is — or what it has been reduced to, since the only extant version is likely to be the two-and-a-half-hour one now being released in Britain. One thing should be immediately remarked: various lacunae and leaps in plot continuity and character development which might be attributed to the re-editing turn out to be just what the original reviews were complaining about. Compression cannot do away with what is the film's most striking quality, and hence its problem: its bypassing of narrative for the balletic arrangement of history.

A case in point is the Oxford-as-Harvard opening sequence. The very youthful-looking Kris Kristofferson and John Hurt are part of the graduating class of 1870, and the euphoria of the historical moment — a nation poised between the end of a war and the launching of Manifest Destiny — is orchestrated from a parade ("The Battle Hymn of the Republic") to massed dancing in the quadrangle ("The Blue Danube"). In these two musical themes the central conflict of the film is already intimated: democracy vs. privilege; the Promised Land vs. Vested Interests. More than this, however, the choreography of the sequence suggests a design that will carry through the rest of the film. One of the central rituals of graduation involves the class of '70 assaulting a massive tree in the middle of the quad, defended by dancing circles of other students, and plucking victory from a garland of flowers around the trunk. As history would have it, some twenty years later Kristofferson (finds himself engaged in a similar assault, leading a ragged army of European

Wanting to be loved

By Helen McNeill

Four Seasons
Various cinemas

As its title bluntly announces, Alan Alda's film follows a year in the emotional lives of three bourgeois couples. Jack and Kate and Dan and Claudia and Nick and Anne, aged from their early forties to mid-fifties, have the money and leisure to think about the really important things in life: love, friendship and food. They've got problems, but they're happy problems. Jack, the stability-loving lawyer (Alan Alda) looks up brightly from the Moo Shu pork that he and his buddies have lovingly cooked to celebrate Nick and Anne's anniversary. Smugly he offers a toast to the six close friends "huddled against the cold winds of divorce".

Next day, Nick (Len Cariou) confides to Jack that he plans to divorce his compulsive wife Anne: "I want somebody I can get excited by". Anne, played by Sandy Dennis with teeth and neuroses as evident as ever, has been finding herself through creative photography, but after three years she still hasn't got past portraits of vegetables. Her zucchini period alone lasted a year and a half. Nick's open assertion of his right to ditch Anne and start all over again with a young, sexy mistress challenges his male friends' glib assumptions about their own supposed maturity. The rest of the film deals with how the husbands' repressed jealousies and fears strain their relations with their understanding wives. Finally, however, everyone adjusts to the new situation.

Following the conventions of romantic comedy, *Four Seasons* shows no interest in how its lawyer

immigrants against the cattlemen who have invaded Johnson County with a death list of "thieves and anarchists".

The distance between Harvard 1870 and Wyoming 1890 is covered in a brief voice-over from Kristofferson, who has deserted his coterie of privilege to become marshal of Johnson County and defender of the poor and huddled masses. More explanation of motive, or exploration of character, the film never offers. Hurt, similarly, remains a drunken ditherer, by virtue of his class a member of the cattlemen's club even if his reason leads elsewhere (when it is not sunk in his cups). At the end of the jubilant Harvard sequence, he is the only crestfallen face, as he realizes that he will never live up to the promise of his school years. In Johnson County, Kristofferson enters into a triangular relationship with a gunman (Christopher Walken) employed by the cattlemen though himself the child of immigrants, and the local madam (Isabelle Huppert). Cimino's design is made for set-pieces, however, not intimacy, and it is Ms Huppert's misfortune to be the key to the centre of the film's worst scenes.

What *Heaven's Gate* most surprisingly manages is to move to the opposite end of the populist spectrum from *The Deer Hunter*. Where that film was accused of being unthinkingly right-wing about Vietnam, this can only seem self-consciously left-wing in tracing the culpability for the immigrants' plight from the cattle barons via the state governor to the President himself. The truth is that Cimino's sympathies, in both films, probably embrace both: political poles. Here his identification with the immigrants descends occasionally towards the folksy, though it is saved by the stately musical pattern, with that opening waltz of the Harvard elite eventually answered by the proletarian equivalent on a roller-skating rink known as "Heaven's Gate".

dentist and insurance salesman protagonists have acquired the means to lead their evidently easy lives. We see the couples only on holiday together: Spring in the Catskills, Summer yachting in the Virgin Islands, Autumn visiting an Ivy League campus, and Winter skiing in the Berkshires. As director, script-writer and star, Alan Alda has packaged his treatment of middle-aged love in a comfortably recognizable structure of television situation comedy, dividing his plot mechanically into four episodes, each with food scene, amateur sports scene, recognition scene, etc. While this banal presentation permits Alda's mildly unfashionable subject to be accepted as entertainment, it also undermines the film's presumed seriousness. *Four Seasons* silently accepts so many social and dramatic clichés that its character studies are irreversibly trivialized.

The most comic sequence, Summer, succeeds by commenting on a claustrophobia which goes unnoticed elsewhere in the film. Trapped in their chartered yacht, Jake and Kate and Dan and Claudia can't escape the "mating calls" of ebullient Nick and his surprisingly nice mistress Ginnie. Crouched in the stern, Kate nags Jack to admit he's really jealous of Nick. Then Jack, Dan and Nick squabble in the pint-sized galley. That night, as Kate and Jack sit in their cramped bunk reading law reports to drown the erotic groans and thumps from the other side of the cabin wall, Jack finally cracks: "What is she doing to him?" He and his wife dissolve in the shared laughter which is Alda's cultural emblem of happy intimacy; in *Four Seasons*, married couples are never seen kissing.

Alan Alda uses the analytic wisecrack with complete confidence, having been one of its originators as Hawkeye in the television series of *M.A.S.H.* "I have the feeling you're all deserting me," says Anne, as her friends cringe with embarrassment upon finding that she has come up to visit her daughter at university the same weekend as the rest of them. The fat hypochondriac dentist Jack complains to his wife: "People are talking about my paranoia behind my back." The effect, however, isn't lastingly satiric; we are expected to feel warm sympathy for the neurotic creature suffering under the quip.

Despite its satiric and romantic overtones, in fact, *Four Seasons* is an example of a new genre perhaps best called analytic comedy, which has quietly become a major Hollywood mode. Paul Mazursky's *Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice* (1969) was a satire about encounter group therapy, but a few years later, in *Blume in Love*, Mazursky had internalized the sorts of assumptions about analysis and self-analysis which his earlier film had questioned. Woody Allen began, with these assumptions, Mazursky, Allen, Robert Redford in *Ordinary People*, Alda and Neil Simon in his recent work all write or direct analytic comedies, in which comic confessional declaration is taken in seriousness to be the key to a happiness available to all who love each other enough. Even John Cassavetes's tragicomedies share this view. Redford's fable of reconciliation was culturally validated by Academy Awards; Alda's fable of adjustment is certainly likely to receive nominations. *Four Seasons* is often perceptive in its depiction of self-presentation and self-conscious historicizing, but it doesn't begin to question why its characters need to assert so often that they are adults, or why they need to reassure each other with excessive regularity that "I love you". The analytic comedy itself wants to be loved; hence its failure as satire. Alda mugs reactions to many of his own jokes, urging us to share in his warm-hearted fun. In a full theatre, after a full meal, I imagine it works; but on analysis, it falls flat.